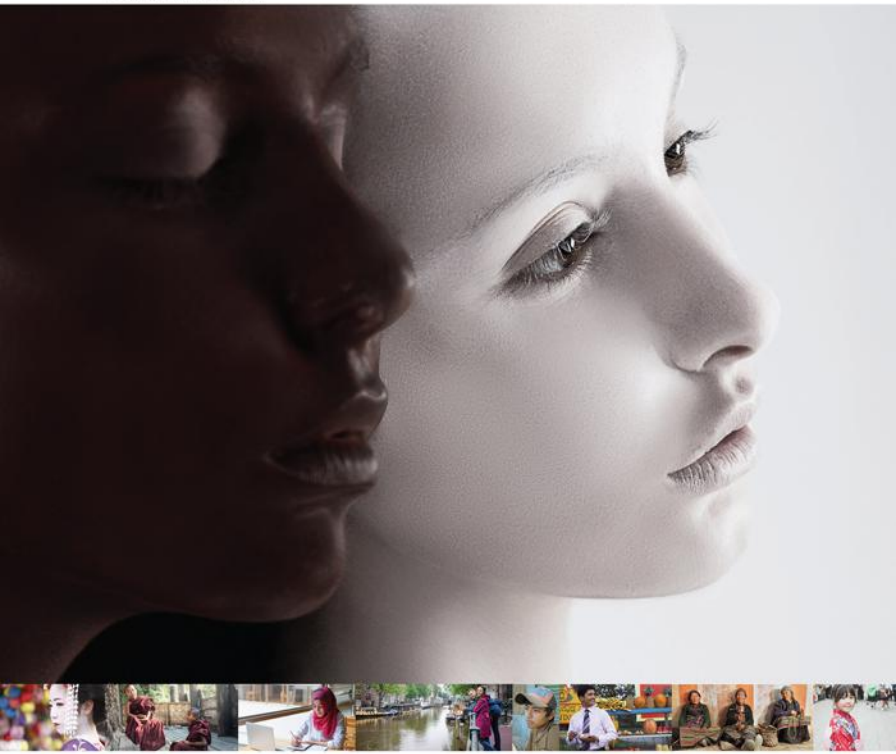
CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Fourth Edition



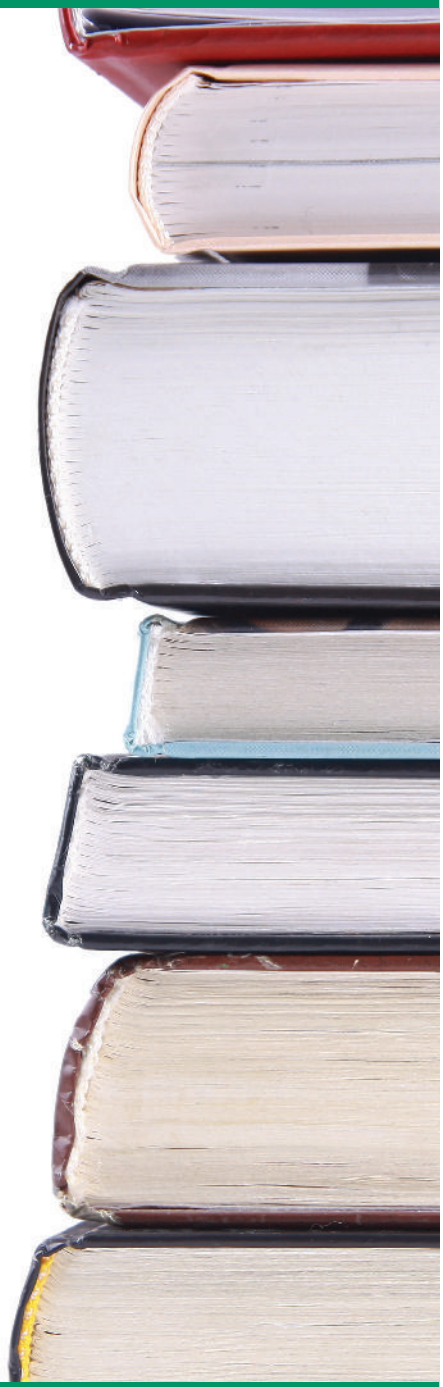
Nancy Bonvillain


CANADA
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
ALASKA
GREENLAND
MEXICO
New York
Washington D.C.
Los Angeles
ATLANTIC OCEAN
PACIFIC OCEAN
BRAZIL
ARGENTINA
BOLIVIA
PERU
CHILE
VENEZUELA
COLOMBIA
ECUADOR
GUYANA
SURINAME
FRENCH GUIANA
PARAGUAY
URUGUAY
RUSSIAN FEDERATION
KAZAKHSTAN
MONGOLIA
CHINA
INDIA
IRAN
TURKEY
SAUDI ARABIA
ALGERIA
LIBYA
EGYPT
MALI
NIGER
CHAD
SUDAN
ETHIOPIA
NIGERIA
ANGOLA
ZAMBIA
NAMIBIA
SOUTH AFRICA
MADAGASCAR
TANZANIA
KENYA
DEM. REP. CONGO
INDIAN OCEAN
AUSTRALIA
NEW ZEALAND
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
INDONESIA
PHILIPPINES
JAPAN
MALAYSIA
Sydney
Cape Town
Rio de Janeiro
São Paulo

Why Do You Need this New Edition?

If you're wondering why you should buy this new edition of Cultural Anthropology, here are 8 good reasons!

- New sections on virtual ethnography and engaged anthropology in Chapter 3
- New sections on language ideologies and online communication in Chapter 4
- Expanded discussion of climate change and new sections on the reactions of indigenous and local communities against mines, pipelines, oil wells, and other national and multinational companies exploiting local resources and harming the environment
- New discussions on agricultural use of GMOs (genetically modified organisms) and problems of the global availability of potable water in Chapter 8
- Expanded discussion of widowhood in Chapter 10
- Expanded discussion of gender identity, including transgender identities, in Chapter 11
- Expanded discussion of white privilege and new discussion of student debt in Chapter 12
- New section on Balinese arts in Chapter 16



Pearson

This page intentionally left blank

Cultural Anthropology

Fourth Edition

Nancy Bonvillain
Bard College at Simon's Rock

Pearson

330 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10013

Vice President, Program Management: Eric G. Stano
Managing Editor: Marita Sermolins Bley
Development Editor: Dan Vest
Marketing Manager: Susan Osterlitz
Program Manager: Erin Bosco
Project Coordination, Text Design, and Electronic Page Makeup: Integra Software Services Pvt. Ltd.
Cover Designer: JayBird Productions
Cover Art: Row 1: (main image) gromovataya/Fotolia; Row 2: (farthest left) KPG_Payless/Shutterstock, (far left) SasinTipchai/Shutterstock, (left) Kdonmuang/Shutterstock, (center left) Comaniciu Dan/Shutterstock, (center right) Leon Rafael/Shutterstock, (right) bikeriderlondon/Shutterstock, (far right) hadynyah/E+/Getty Images, (farthest right) Anurak Pongpatimet/Shutterstock
Manufacturing Buyer: Mary Ann Gloriande
Printer/Binder: LSC Communications, Inc.
Cover Printer: Phoenix Color/Hagerstown

Acknowledgments of third-party content appear on pages 500–501, which constitute an extension of this copyright page.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Bonvillain, Nancy, author.
Title: Cultural anthropology/Nancy Bonvillain.
Description: Fourth edition. | Hoboken: Pearson Higher Education, [2018] | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2016056420 | ISBN 9780134632483 (alk. paper)
Subjects: LCSH: Ethnology.
Classification: LCC GN316 .B67 2018 | DDC 306—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2016056420

1 17

Student Edition
ISBN 10: 0-134-63248-6
ISBN 13: 978-0-134-63248-3

Revel Access Code Card
ISBN 10: 0-134-72299-X
ISBN 13: 978-0-134-72299-3

Brief Contents

This page intentionally left blank

Contents

Special Features

Case Study

Culture Change

Controversies

In Their Own Voices

Anthropology Applied

Preface

Cultural Anthropology, Fourth Edition, is intended to introduce students to the concepts and methods that anthropologists bring to the study of cross-cultural diversity. It focuses on understanding how cultural practices and beliefs develop, how they are integrated, and how they change. The goal of this book is consistent with one of the goals of most anthropology teachers: to excite students about the world in which we all live. Although much in people's behaviors and attitudes differs throughout the world, much also unites us. The book therefore provides a global view of humanity's many facets. It takes a traditional approach in chapter organization, focusing on various aspects of societal organization and expression. It also makes central the role of cultural change, processes of adaptation and transformation that are integral to all societies. In addition to learning about other peoples, anthropology as a discipline and a framework of analysis has the potential to help students appreciate the cultural patterns underlying their own behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes. This book attempts to present the voices of the peoples who anthropologists often study. Through these voices, and through analyses of indigenous and marginalized people today, students may come to understand the global processes that affect us all.

An important feature distinguishing this text is its thorough focus on culture change, derived from internal processes of adaptation and innovation as well as from external forces through contact with other peoples. The context of contact is critical, of course. In some cases, contact is friendly and benign, with each group exchanging ideas, practices, and material goods as equals. In other cases, contact occurs between groups that are unequal in their power and ability to control their own lives and exert control over others. In focusing on change, this text highlights the notion that the societies and cultures that people develop are dynamic systems, adapted to new situations and invigorated by new ideas.

The focus on culture change is carried into the discussions of global trends, whether these are the processes of past colonial expansion or of modern globalization. These two kinds of processes are interrelated because modern globalization has resulted from the legacies of colonial expansion. These issues are discussed throughout the book. They are specifically introduced in Chapter 6 (Colonialism and Cultural Transformations). As the title suggests, this chapter establishes the framework for understanding historical processes of European colonial expansion and some of their consequences for cultural development and survival in many parts of the world. These effects are discussed topically and regionally where relevant in subsequent chapters. Discussion of global processes of cultural changes culminates in Chapter 17 (Living in a Global World).

What's New in This Edition

- New sections on virtual ethnography and engaged anthropology in Chapter 3
- New sections on language ideologies and online communication in Chapter 4
- Expanded discussion of climate change and new sections on the reactions of indigenous and local communities against mines, pipelines, oil wells, and other national and multinational companies exploiting local resources and harming the environment
- New discussions on agricultural use of GMOs (genetically modified organisms) and problems of the global availability of potable water in Chapter 8
- Expanded discussion of widowhood in Chapter 10
- Expanded discussion of gender identity, including transgender identities, in Chapter 11

- Expanded discussion of white privilege and new discussion of student debt in Chapter 12
- New section on Balinese arts in Chapter 16

Throughout the text there are updates of statistical information on economic trends in the United States and globally, refugees worldwide, on other current political issues.

Throughout the text there are changes to clarify terms and concepts, as well as expanded discussions.

In addition, a number of the chapter opening folktales have been replaced, as have several of the In Their Own Voices boxes.

Format of the Book

The book consists of seventeen chapters covering the breadth of the discipline of cultural anthropology. The first three chapters lay the groundwork for the study of human culture. Chapter 1 (What Is Anthropology?) presents the basic outline of the field of anthropology, describing its development, exemplifying its various subdisciplines, and introducing some of its basic theoretical questions. Chapter 2 (The Nature of Culture) discusses some universal characteristics of culture and describes how human societies are organized to meet people's needs. It also introduces a key focus of this text, namely understanding that cultures are dynamic systems of behavior and belief, ever changing and adjusting to internal and external forces. Chapter 3 (Studying Culture) takes a closer look at the specific methodologies that anthropologists have developed to analyze cultural behavior and build theories to explain both similarities and differences found throughout the world. It offers an array of theoretical perspectives used to analyze culture. It also takes readers into the experience of fieldwork, a hallmark of anthropological research.

The next two chapters describe the systems of language and socialization basic to all human societies. Chapter 4 (Language and Culture) introduces topics in the structure of language but concentrates on the complex relationships between language and other aspects of culture. Chapter 5 (Learning One's Culture) addresses the various perspectives that different societies take about the ways that parents and families raise their children and teach them the norms and values of their communities.

Following these sections, Chapter 6 (Colonialism and Cultural Transformations) directly confronts the history and cultural consequences in indigenous societies wrought by European colonialism beginning in the sixteenth century, although the dynamics of colonial and imperial control both predate and follow European dominance. The chapter has been moved to this position early in the text (it was the penultimate chapter in previous editions) in order to highlight the importance of culture change, a topic further analyzed in subsequent chapters.

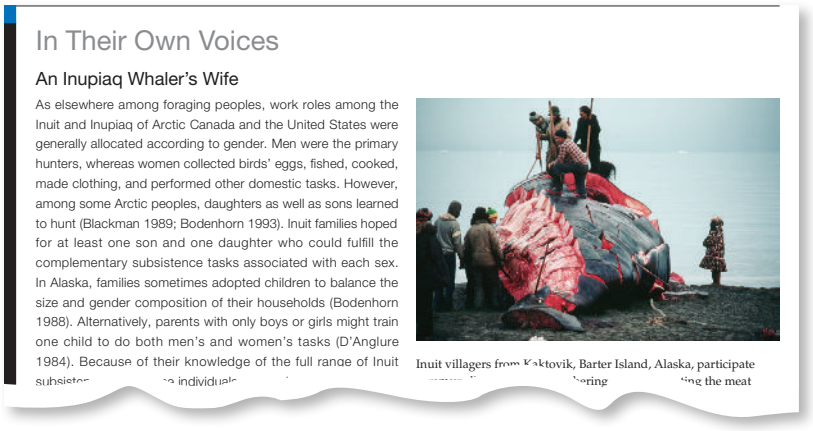
The text then proceeds with discussions of specific topics within cultural anthropology. Chapters 7 (Making a Living) and 8 (Economic Systems) focus on subsistence practices, ways of making a living, and patterns of production and exchange. Chapters 9 (Kinship and Descent) and 10(Marriage and the Family) describe the various systems of kinship found throughout the world, detailing different patterns of reckoning descent and forming marriages and families. In Chapter 11 (Gender), we look closely at issues of gender, attempting to understand the conditions under which egalitarian gender relationships and attitudes are sustained as well as the conditions under which inequality between men and women is established. Chapter 12 (Equality and Inequality) also considers issues of inequality in the realm of social stratification, analyzing social segmentation on the basis of caste, class, race, and ethnicity. Chapter 13 (Political Systems) furthers this discussion in the analysis of political systems, including ways of establishing leadership, arriving at group decisions, and settling disputes both within a community and between communities. This last topic is continued in Chapter 14 (Conflict and Conflict Resolution), a unique chapter that takes a detailed look at the reasons for conflict and the methods of conflict resolution in different types of societies.

Chapters 15 (Religion) and 16 (The Arts) focus on various aspects of expressive and symbolic culture. Chapter 15 is concerned with the ways that people express religious beliefs and organize religious practice. It relates these beliefs and practices to other aspects of social, economic, and political life. Chapter 16 is concerned with aesthetic values and their embodiment in artistic production.

Finally, Chapter 17 (Living in a Global World) is directly concerned with themes of cultural change that permeate the text and are addressed in every chapter. In this final chapter of the book, we look at recent global trends influencing the lives of indigenous peoples in the twenty-first century and discover how these trends have local manifestations.

Special Features

In addition to the focus on change, the text is tied together by a number of features of content and style. Each chapter begins with a narrative, usually a sacred or secular story that dramatizes important themes discussed in the chapter.


In Their Own Voices

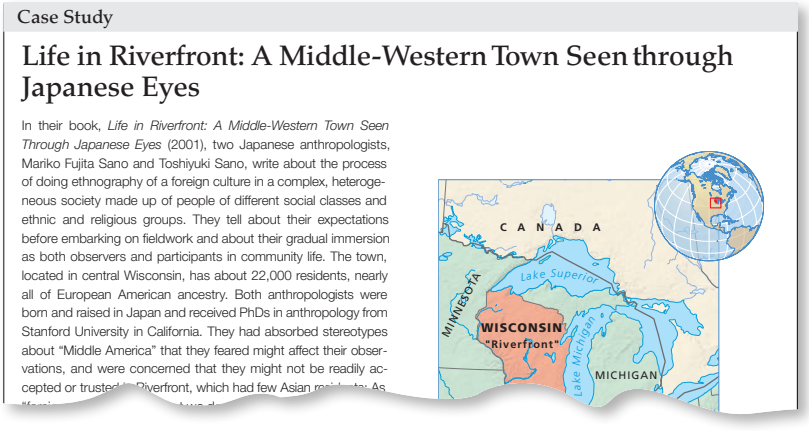
An Inupiaq Whaler's Wife

As elsewhere among foraging peoples, work roles among the Inuit and Inupiaq of Arctic Canada and the United States were generally allocated according to gender. Men were the primary hunters, whereas women collected birds' eggs, fished, cooked, made clothing, and performed other domestic tasks. However, among some Arctic peoples, daughters as well as sons learned to hunt (Blackman 1989; Bodenhorn 1993). Inuit families hoped for at least one son and one daughter who could fulfill the complementary subsistence tasks associated with each sex. In Alaska, families sometimes adopted children to balance the size and gender composition of their households (Bodenhorn 1988). Alternatively, parents with only boys or girls might train one child to do both men's and women's tasks (D'Anglure 1984). Because of their knowledge of the full range of Inuit

Inuit villagers from Kaktovik, Barter Island, Alaska, participate

In Their Own Voices boxes feature the words of indigenous peoples whose lives are discussed in the text.

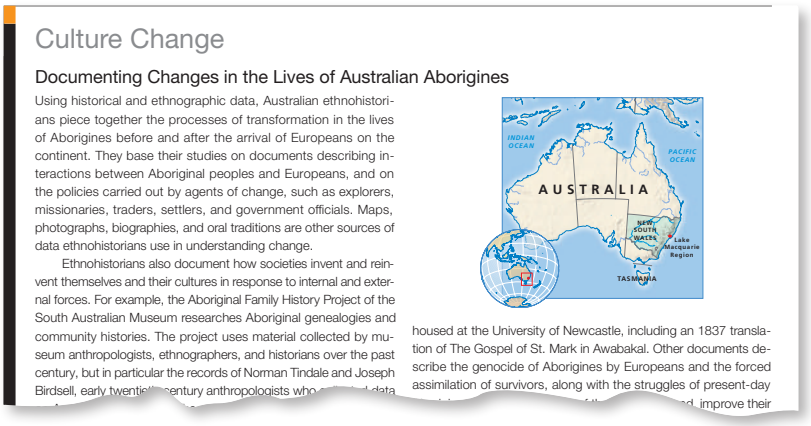
Case Study features provide extended discussions that enable students to understand complex relationships among various practices.


Case Study

Life in Riverfront: A Middle-Western Town Seen through Japanese Eyes

In their book, *Life in Riverfront: A Middle-Western Town Seen Through Japanese Eyes* (2001), two Japanese anthropologists, Mariko Fujita Sano and Toshiyuki Sano, write about the process of doing ethnography of a foreign culture in a complex, heterogeneous society made up of people of different social classes and ethnic and religious groups. They tell about their expectations before embarking on fieldwork and about their gradual immersion as both observers and participants in community life. The town, located in central Wisconsin, has about 22,000 residents, nearly all of European American ancestry. Both anthropologists were born and raised in Japan and received PhDs in anthropology from Stanford University in California. They had absorbed stereotypes about "Middle America" that they feared might affect their observations, and were concerned that they might not be readily accepted or trusted in Riverfront, which had few Asian

CANADA
Lake Superior
MINNESOTA
WISCONSIN
"Riverfront"
Lake Michigan
MICHIGAN



Culture Change

Documenting Changes in the Lives of Australian Aborigines

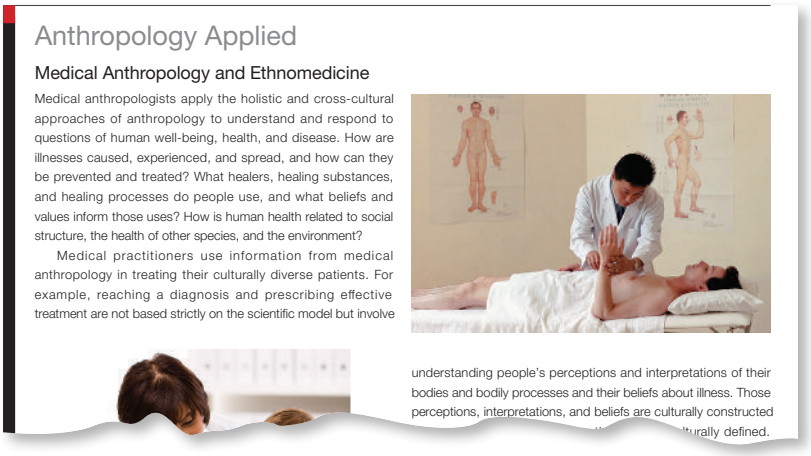
Using historical and ethnographic data, Australian ethnohistorians piece together the processes of transformation in the lives of Aborigines before and after the arrival of Europeans on the continent. They base their studies on documents describing interactions between Aboriginal peoples and Europeans, and on the policies carried out by agents of change, such as explorers, missionaries, traders, settlers, and government officials. Maps, photographs, biographies, and oral traditions are other sources of data ethnohistorians use in understanding change.

Ethnohistorians also document how societies invent and reinvent themselves and their cultures in response to internal and external forces. For example, the Aboriginal Family History Project of the South Australian Museum researches Aboriginal genealogies and community histories. The project uses material collected by museum anthropologists, ethnographers, and historians over the past century, but in particular the records of Norman Tindale and Joseph Birdsell, early twenti[illegible]century anthropologists who [illegible]

housed at the University of Newcastle, including an 1837 translation of The Gospel of St. Mark in Awabakal. Other documents describe the genocide of Aborigines by Europeans and the forced assimilation of survivors, along with the struggles of present-day [illegible] improve their

Culture Change features present material focusing specifically on the ways that culture is transformed. They stress the interconnections among material change, behavioral practices, and ideology, demonstrating the complex interactions that result from change.

Anthropology Applied boxes have been expanded and highlight the roles that anthropologists play in applying theory and knowledge to practical concerns.



Anthropology Applied

Medical Anthropology and Ethnomedicine

Medical anthropologists apply the holistic and cross-cultural approaches of anthropology to understand and respond to questions of human well-being, health, and disease. How are illnesses caused, experienced, and spread, and how can they be prevented and treated? What healers, healing substances, and healing processes do people use, and what beliefs and values inform those uses? How is human health related to social structure, the health of other species, and the environment?

Medical practitioners use information from medical anthropology in treating their culturally diverse patients. For example, reaching a diagnosis and prescribing effective treatment are not based strictly on the scientific model but involve

understanding people's perceptions and interpretations of their bodies and bodily processes and their beliefs about illness. Those perceptions, interpretations, and beliefs are culturally constructed [illegible]turally defined.

Finally, the book contains pedagogical features including a margin glossary and marginal notes, preview and summary questions, critical thinking questions, and both section reviews and chapter summaries. These features help students focus on significant ideas and concepts presented in each chapter.

Support for Instructors and Students

This book is accompanied by an extensive learning package to enhance the experience of both instructors and students.

Revel™

Educational Technology Designed for the Way Today's Students Read, Think, and Learn

When students are engaged deeply, they learn more effectively and perform better in their courses. This simple fact inspired the creation of Revel: an interactive learning environment designed for the way today's students read, think, and learn.

Revel enlivens course content with media interactives and assessments—integrated directly within the authors' narrative—that provide opportunities for students to read, practice, and study in one continuous experience. This immersive educational technology replaces the textbook and is designed to measurably boost students' understanding, retention, and preparedness.

Learn more about Revel at
http://www.pearsonhighered.com/revel/.

INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL WITH TESTS For each chapter in the text, this valuable resource provides a chapter outline, preview questions, lecture topics, research topics, and questions for classroom discussion. In addition, test questions in multiple-choice and essay formats are available for each chapter; the answers are page-referenced to the text. For easy access, this manual is available at **www.pearsonhighered.com**.

MYTEST This computerized software allows instructors to create their own personalized exams, to edit any or all of the existing test questions, and to add new questions. Other special features of this program include random generation of test questions, creation of alternate versions of the same test, scrambling question sequence, and test preview before printing. For easy access, this software is available at **www.pearsonhighered.com**.

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION FOR *CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY* These PowerPoint slides combine text and graphics for each chapter to help instructors convey anthropological principles in a clear and engaging way. In addition, Classroom Response System (CRS) In-Class Questions allow for instant, class-wide student responses to chapter-specific questions during lectures for teachers to gauge student comprehension. For easy access, they are available at www.pearsonhighered.com.

ETHNOQUEST® This interactive multimedia simulation includes a series of ten ethnographic encounters with the culture of a fictional Mexican village set in a computer-based learning environment. It provides students with a realistic problem-solving experience and is designed to help students experience the fieldwork of a cultural anthropologist. Please see your Pearson sales representative for more information about **EthnoQuest®**.

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank the many people who helped with the editorial work and production work on this fourth edition. They include, from Ohlinger Publishing Services, Marita Sermolins Bley (Managing Editor), Carolyn Merrill (Editor in Chief), Erin Bosco (Production Manager) and Joe Croscup (Permission Manager). A very special note of gratitude goes to Dan Vest (Development Editor) whose advice and support throughout the production process was invaluable and very much appreciated.

I also wish to thank Laura Zhu, Samantha Waldron, and Molly McGowan, students from Bard College at Simon's Rock who helped identify and update statistical data that was used throughout the text.

Additionally, I would like to thank the reviewers whose careful reading and valuable suggestions aided me in refining this revision. Responsibility for the final version is, of course, my own.

For their constructive reviewing of the first and second editions, I would like to thank the following: Diane Baxter, University of Oregon; John Beatty, Brooklyn College; Ann Louise Bragdon, Northwest College–Houston Community College System; Vaughn M. Bryant, Texas A&M University; Andrew Buckser, Purdue University; Ratimaya Bush, Wright State University; Gregory R. Campbell, The University of Montana; Erve Chambers, University of Maryland; Wanda Clark, South Plains College; Samuel Gerald Collins, Towson University; Karla L. Davis, University of South Florida; William W. Donner, Kutztown University; Charles O. Ellenbaum, College of DuPage; Blenda Femenias, Brown University; Carol Hayman, Austin Community College; Dorothy Hodgson, Rutgers; David E. Jones, University of Central Florida; Barry D. Kass, State University of New York–Orange County; Theresa Kintz, Wilkes University; Joshua S. Levin, Community College of Southern Nevada; Susan R. Martin, Michigan Tech University; Geoffrey G. Pope, William Patterson University; Kevin Rafferty, Community College of Southern Nevada; Frank A. Salamone, Iona College;

Josh Schendel, University of Tennessee; Wesley Shumar, Drexel University; Susan R. Trencher, George Mason University; John Ambenge, Middlesex Community College; Michael Angrosino, University of South Florida; Christina Beard-Moose, Suffolk County Community College; Vaughn M. Bryant, Texas A&M University; Samuel Gerald Collins, Towson University; Molly Doane, University of Illinois at Chicago; William W. Donner, Kutztown University; Louis Forline, University of Nevada, Reno; Renee Garcia, Saddleback College; Ellen S. Ginsburg, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences; Jon Hageman, Northeastern Illinois University; Barbara Jones, Brookdale Community College; Susan R. Martin, Michigan Technological University; Derek Maxfield, Capital Community College; Chrisy Moutsatsos, Iowa State University; Richard Scaglion, University of Pittsburgh; Angela M. Siner, University of Toledo; James Todd, Modesto Junior College; Susan R. Trencher, George Mason University; Cassandra White, Georgia State University; Herbert Ziegler, Chesapeake College.

Adjust formatting to match what was in the approved CE manuscript (I would also like to thank the following people who offered suggestions for previous editions: Amber Clifford, University of Central Missouri; Lorna Beard, University of Arkansas–Ft. Smith; Henry W. Shulz, City College of San Francisco; Pearsce Paul Creasman, University of Arizona; Linda Jerofke, Eastern Oregon University; Andrew Kinkella, Moorpark College; Kerry Pataki, Portland Community College; Robert Davis, Treasure Valley Community College.)

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation for those individuals who reviewed the third edition of Cultural Anthropology: Katie Zeoli, Cypress College; John Ambenge, Middlesex Community College; Deniss Edwards, San Jacinto College South; Jessica Rolston, Colorado School of Mines; Erica Govich, Clovis Community College; Michael McCamish, Chatanooga State Community College; Amber Clifford Napoleone, University of Central Missouri; Thomas Leverett, Texas Tech University; Robin Conley, Marshall University; Mary Slade, College of the Desert.

Finally, I would like to thank Pearson for its continued support of *Cultural Anthropology*.

Chapter 1
What Is Anthropology?

Learning Objectives

1.1 Explain the core concepts that distinguish anthropology from other disciplines.

1.2 Describe the four subfields of anthropology.

1.3 Articulate how applied anthropology relates to the four main subfields of anthropology.

There were villagers at the Middle Place and a girl had her home there . . . where she kept a flock of turkeys.

At the Middle Place they were having a Yaaya Dance . . . and during the first day this girl . . . stayed with her turkeys, taking care of them. . . . . [I]t seems she didn't go to the dance on the first day, that day she fed her turkeys . . . and so the dance went on and she could hear the drum.

When she spoke to her turkeys about this, they said, "If you went it wouldn't turn out well: Who would take care of us?" That's what her turkeys told her.

She listened to them and they slept through the night.

Then it was the second day of the dance and . . . with the Yaaya Dance half over she spoke to her big tom turkey:

"My father-child, if they're going to do it again tomorrow why can't I go?" she said. "Well if you went, it wouldn't turn out well." That's what he told her. "Well then I mustn't go."

The next day was a nice warm day, and again she heard the drum over there.

Then she went around feeding her turkeys, and when it was the middle of the day, she asked again, right at noon. "If you went, it wouldn't turn out well . . . our lives depend on your thoughtfulness," that's what the turkeys told her.

"Well then, that's the way it will be," she said, and she listened to them.

But around sunset the drum could be heard, and she was getting more anxious to go . . .

She went up on her roof and she could see the crowd of people. It was the third day of the dance.

That night she asked the same one she asked before and he told her, "Well, if you must go, then you must dress well."

"You must think of us, for if you stay all afternoon, until sunset, then it won't turn out well for you," he told her.

The next day the sun was shining, and she went among her turkeys and . . . when she had fed them she said, "My fathers, my children, I'm going to the Middle Place. I'm going to the dance," she said. "Be on your way, but think of us." That's what her children told her.

She went to where the place was, and when she entered the plaza . . . she went down and danced, and she didn't think about her children.

Finally it was mid-day, and . . . she was just dancing away until it was late, the time when the shadows are very long.

The turkeys said, "Our mother, our child doesn't know what's right."

"Well then, I must go and I'll just warn her and come right back and whether she hears me or not, we'll leave before she gets here." That's what the turkey said, and he flew . . . along until he came to where they were dancing, and there he glided down to the place and . . . sang,

"Kyana tok tok Kyana tok tok."

The one who was dancing heard him.

He flew back to the place where they were penned, and the girl ran all the way back. When she got to the place where they were penned, they sang again, they sang and flew away . . . .

When she came near they all went away and she couldn't catch up to them.

Long ago, this was lived.

Source: From *Finding the Center: Narrative Poetry of the Zuni Indians.* 2nd edition, translated by Denis Tedlock, reprinted by permission of The University of Nebraska Press. © 1999 by Denis Tedlock.

"The Girl Who Took Care of the Turkeys" is a Zuni narrative. A Native American people who live in what is now New Mexico, Zunis traditionally supported themselves by farming. They also kept domesticated turkeys, whose feathers they used to make ceremonial gear. In the story, the young girl uses kin terms when addressing the turkeys to indicate her close bonds with them.

You may have noticed similarities between this Zuni story and the European story of Cinderella. In both, the central character is a young woman who wants to go to a dance but is at first dissuaded or, in Cinderella's case, prevented from doing so. Eventually, she does attend, but is warned that she must be sure to return home early. In both stories, the girl stays past the appointed time because she is enjoying herself. The Zuni and European stories, however, differ in both outcomes and details.

The similarities and differences between these stories are no coincidence. Zunis first learned the Cinderella story from white settlers in the 1880s and transformed the tale to fit their circumstances, values, and way of life. This is an example of selective borrowing that takes place when members of different cultures meet, share experiences, and learn from one another. Global influences have accelerated borrowing over the past five centuries.

The Zunis reverse the ethical standing of the story's characters. Cinderella, who yearns to go to the ball, is a virtuous and long-suffering servant to her wicked family. The Zuni girl is also a caretaker for her family, the flock of turkeys (whom she significantly addresses as "father" and "child"), but she is not a figure of virtue. On the

contrary, to go to the dance, she has to neglect her duties, threatening the turkeys' well-being, as they say to her, "You must think of us."

And what happens? Cinderella marries the prince and emerges triumphant, but disaster befalls the Zuni girl. The European story of individual virtue and fortitude rewarded has become a Zuni story of moral failing and irresponsibility to one's relatives and dependents.

The differences between Europeans and Zunis fit into a constellation of features that define Zuni and European culture—the languages they speak, how they feed and shelter themselves, what they wear, the material goods they value, how they make those goods and distribute them among themselves, how they form families, households, and alliances, and how they worship the deities they believe in. This concept—culture—is central to the discipline of anthropology in general and to cultural anthropology, the subject of this book, in particular.

The Study of Humanity

1.1 Explain the core concepts that distinguish anthropology from other disciplines.

Anthropology, broadly defined, is the study of humanity, from its evolutionary origins millions of years ago to its present worldwide diversity. Many other disciplines, of course, also focus on one aspect or another of humanity. Like sociology, economics, political science, psychology, and other behavioral and social sciences, anthropology is concerned with how people organize their lives and relate to one another in interacting, interconnected groups—**societies**—that share basic beliefs and practices. Like economists, anthropologists are interested in society's material foundations—how people produce and distribute food and other goods. Like sociologists, anthropologists are interested in how people structure their relations in society—in families, at work, in institutions. Like political scientists, anthropologists are interested in power and authority: who has them and how they are allocated. And like psychologists, anthropologists are interested in individual development and the interaction between society and individual people.

anthropology
The study of humanity, from its evolutionary origins millions of years ago to its current worldwide diversity.

societies
Populations of people living in organized groups with social institutions and expectations of behavior.

Anthropologists also share an interest in human evolution and human anatomy with those in the biological sciences. They share an interest in the past of peoples and communities with historians. As the discussion of the Zuni story that opens this chapter suggests, they share an interest in how people express themselves with students of literature, art, and music. And they are interested in the diversity of human philosophical systems, ethical systems, and religious beliefs.

culture
The learned values, beliefs, and rules of conduct that are shared to some extent by the members of a society, and that govern their behavior with one another.

Although anthropology shares many interests with other disciplines, the following key features distinguish it as a separate area of study:

- A focus on the concept of culture
- A holistic perspective
- A comparative perspective

These features are the source of anthropology's insights into both common humanity and the diversity with which that humanity is expressed.

Cultural anthropologists seek to explain people's thoughts and behaviors in terms of their culture or way of life.

The Concept of Culture

Anthropology is unique in its focus on the role of **culture** in shaping human behavior. We examine this important concept in detail in Chapter 2. For now, we can define culture as the learned values, beliefs, and rules of conduct shared to some extent by the members of a society and that govern their behavior with one another and how they think about themselves and the world. Culture can be broadly

symbolic culture
The ideas people have about themselves, others, and the world, and the ways that people express these ideas.

material culture
The tools people make and use, the clothing and ornaments they wear, the buildings they live in, and the household utensils they use.

divided into **symbolic culture**—people's ideas and means of communicating those ideas—and **material culture**—the tools, utensils, clothing, housing, and other objects that people make or use. These two areas of culture are not discrete and separate but rather features of material culture can be developed and adapted in ways that promote symbolic culture. The reverse is also true—aspects of symbolic culture can be molded in ways that promote material culture. For example, values that encourage individualism and idealize the nuclear family are interrelated with architectural housing norms that prioritize the notion of private property and the ideal that each child in the household should have his or her own room and that what goes on within a home is private (unless there is violence that reaches unacceptable levels of danger). Popular forms of entertainment, such as films, television programs, video games, and popular music, also promote cultural values by dramatizing the types of families and relationships that are deemed acceptable or unacceptable. In this realm, too, values of individualism, personal achievement, and competition for wealth and prestige are also transmitted.

A Holistic Perspective

holistic perspective
A perspective in anthropology that views culture as an integrated whole, no part of which can be completely understood without considering the whole.

Unlike other behavioral and social sciences, anthropology views cultures from a **holistic perspective**—as an integrated whole, no part of which can be completely understood in isolation. How people arrange rooms in their homes, for example, is related to their marriage and family patterns, which in turn are related to how they earn a living. Thus, the single-family home with individual bedrooms that became the norm in America's suburbs in the twentieth century reflects the value Americans place on individualism and the nuclear family—husband, wife, and their children. These values, in turn, are consistent with an economy in which families are dependent on wage earners acting individually and competitively to find employment. Thus, a holistic perspective that considers the interconnections among factors that contribute to people's behavior helps us understand the kinds of homes in which they live.

Anthropologists, then, attempt to understand all aspects of human culture, past and present. They are interested in people's economic lives and in learning about the food they eat, how they obtain their food, and how they organize their work. They also study people's political lives to know how they organize their communities, select their leaders, and make group decisions. And they investigate people's social lives to understand how they organize their families—whom they marry and live with, and to whom they consider themselves related. Anthropologists also study people's religious lives to learn about the kinds of deities they worship, their beliefs about the spirit world, and the ceremonies they perform.

The ubiquity of electronic music developed in Japan and Korea is an example of global cultural exchange.

Anthropologists understand that cultural norms and values guide but do not dictate people's behavior. They also know that people often idealize their own practices, projecting beliefs about what they do even though their actual behavior may differ from those ideals. For example, when workers are asked about their job responsibilities, they may talk about official procedures and regulations even though their daily work is more flexible and unpredictable.

A Comparative Perspective

The juxtaposition of the Cinderella story and the Zuni narrative of "The Girl Who Took Care of the Turkeys" is a small example of anthropology's comparative perspective at work. Comparing the two stories opens a window onto the contrasting values of Zuni and European cultures and increases our understanding of each.

Anthropology is fundamentally comparative, basing its findings on cultural data drawn from societies throughout the world and from throughout human history. Anthropologists collect data about behavior and beliefs in many societies to document the diversity of human culture and to understand common patterns in how people adapt to their environments, adjust to their neighbors, and develop unique cultural institutions. This **comparative perspective** can challenge common assumptions about human nature based solely on European or North American culture. For example, as you will learn in Chapter 10, marriage and family take many different forms worldwide. Only through systematic comparison can we hope to determine what aspects of marriage and family—or any other aspect of culture, for that matter—might be universal (found in all human societies) and which aspects vary from society to society.

comparative perspective
An approach in anthropology that uses data about the behaviors and beliefs in many societies to document both cultural universals and cultural diversity.

THE COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE AND CULTURE CHANGE. The comparative, or "cross-cultural," perspective also helps people reexamine their own culture. Cultures are not static. They change in response to internal and external pressures. Anthropology's comparative perspective is a powerful tool for understanding **culture change**. Because this concept is so important, each subsequent chapter of this textbook contains a special feature on culture change.

culture change
Changes in people's ways of life over time through both internal and external forces.

THE COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE AND GLOBALIZATION. The comparative perspective also allows anthropologists to evaluate the impact of globalization. **Globalization** is the spread of economic, political, and cultural influences across a large geographic area or many different societies. Through globalization, many countries and communities are enmeshed in networks of power and influence that extend far beyond their borders, exchanging goods and services, forms of entertainment, and information technologies. Although all countries can contribute to globalization in principle, dominant countries have more control over the flow of goods and services and exert more influence over other societies in practice. However, no one country or region of the world controls the process of globalizing. Rather, many powerful countries contribute to globalization.

globalization
The spread of economic, political, and cultural influences throughout a very large geographic area or through a great number of different societies. Through globalization, many countries and local communities are enmeshed in networks of power and influence far beyond their borders, exchanging goods and services, forms of entertainment, and information technologies.

Globalization has occurred in the past when states and empires expanded their influence far beyond their borders. However, one of the distinctions of globalization today is the speed with which it is transforming local cultures as they participate in a worldwide system of interconnected economies and polities. These influences are also changing other aspects of culture, including family structures, religious practices, and aesthetic forms. Along with the export of products and technologies, rapid communications and information systems also spread attitudes and values throughout the world, including capitalist cultural practices, consumerism, cultural icons, and media and entertainment. Finally, globalization is uneven, both in the degree to which goods and services are exchanged in different places and in the way it creates inequalities as well as similarities.

Chapter 2 will further explore cultural transformation and globalization, and their causes and consequences, and they will be considered in depth in Chapters 6 and 17. Culture change is not, however, a recent phenomenon. Cultures are not and never have been static systems. Indeed, changes in beliefs and practices help to strengthen societies and to endow them with the resilience to survive. Therefore, change and stability are not opposite processes. They depend on one another. That is why we highlight examples of cultural transformations throughout this text.

Globalization
Culture contact and culture change, such as occurred between the Europeans and the Zuni, underlie the phenomenon of globalization. Globalization is a major theme of this textbook. The symbol that appears here and elsewhere throughout this textbook calls your attention to globalization-related issues.

What signs of globalization do you see in your immediate surroundings—for example, in your clothes, cars, and information or communications technologies?

REVIEW Anthropology focuses on the study of all aspects of being human. It has many concepts and subjects in common with other behavioral and social sciences, and with biological sciences. Core concepts include culture, culture change, and globalization. Three characteristics differentiate anthropology from other fields: the concept of culture, the holistic perspective, and the comparative perspective.

The Four Subfields of Anthropology

1.2 Describe the four subfields of anthropology.

Almost since it emerged as an academic discipline in the late nineteenth century, anthropology in North America has encompassed four subfields, each with its own focus, methodologies, and theories: cultural anthropology, linguistic anthropology, archaeology, and biological (or physical) anthropology. Each subfield also has branches or interest areas (see Figure 1.1). Table 1.1 identifies some of the many kinds of work anthropologists perform.

Cultural Anthropology

cultural anthropology
The study of cultural behavior, especially the comparative study of living and recent human cultures.

ethnology
Aspect of cultural anthropology involved with building theories about cultural behaviors and forms.

ethnography
Aspect of cultural anthropology involved with observing and documenting peoples' ways of life.

Cultural anthropology is, as the term implies, the study of culture—that is, the study of cultural behavior, attitudes, values, and conceptions of the world. The work of cultural anthropologists centers on **ethnology**, developing theories to explain cultural processes based on the comparative study of societies throughout the world. The method they use to gather these data is called **ethnography**, a holistic, intensive study of groups through observation, interview, participation, and analysis.

To conduct ethnographic research, anthropologists do fieldwork; that is, they live among the people they are studying to compile a full record of their activities. They learn about people's behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes. They study how they make their living, obtain their food, and supply themselves with tools, equipment, and other products. They study how families and communities are organized, and how people form clubs or associations, discuss common interests, make group decisions, and resolve disputes. And they investigate the relationship between the people and larger social institutions—the nations they are part of and their place in the local, regional, and global economies.

Collecting ethnographic information is a significant part of the preservation of indigenous cultures. It contributes to the fund of comparative data cultural anthropologists use to address questions about human cultural diversity. These questions—such as how people acquire culture, how culture affects personality, how family structures and gender roles vary, the role of art and religion, and the impact of global economic forces on local cultures—are the subjects of the chapters of this textbook.

indigenous societies
Peoples who are now minority groups in state societies but who were formerly independent and have occupied their territories for a long time.

In anthropology's early years, cultural anthropologists primarily studied non-Western societies, particularly traditional **indigenous societies**—peoples who were once independent and have occupied their territories for a long time but are now

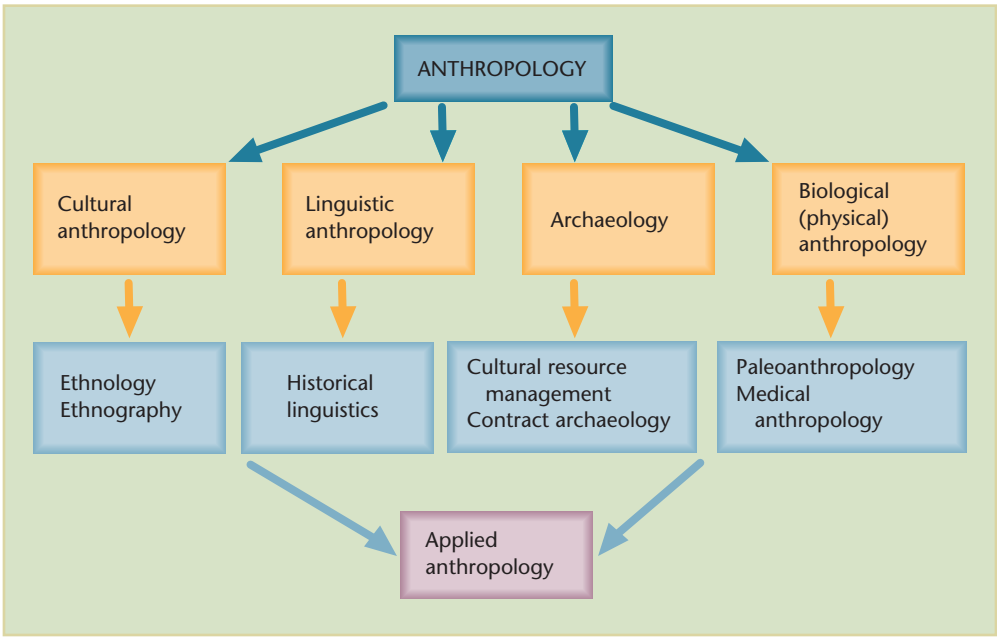


Figure 1.1
Subfields of Anthropology

Table 1.1 Career Opportunities in the Four Subfields of Anthropology

Field	Definition	Examples
Cultural Anthropology	The study of human culture	Ethnographer Ethnologist Museum curator University or college professor International business consultant Cross-cultural researcher
Linguistic Anthropology	The study of language	International business consultant Diplomatic communications worker Administrator Ethnographer Domestic communications worker University or college professor
Archaeology	The study of past cultures	Cultural resource management worker Museum curator University or college professor State archaeologist Historical archaeologist Zoo archaeologist Environmental consultant
Biological (Physical) Anthropology	The study of human origins and biological diversity	Primatologist Geneticist University or college professor Medical researcher Genetic counselor Forensic specialist Government investigator Human rights investigator Biomedical anthropologist

usually minority groups in larger states. These early researchers favored societies in regions of the world that the West's expanding influence had left relatively unaffected or, like the native societies of southern Africa or North and South America, had been overwhelmed and transformed by conquest. The idea was that a small, comparatively homogeneous society could serve as a kind of laboratory for understanding humanity. Over the years, cultural anthropologists have challenged this view, however, and globalization has all but ended cultural isolation. Today, cultural anthropologists are likely to do an ethnographic study of, say, a small town in the American Midwest, Somali refugees adapting to life in Minnesota, Americans participating in a hospice program, changing political systems in Afghanistan, or life in a prison.

Two important concepts—ethnocentrism and cultural relativism—influence the anthropological approach to ethnography and cross-cultural research. **Ethnocentrism** refers to the tendency for people to see themselves metaphorically as being at the center of the universe. They perceive their own culture's way of doing things (making a living, raising children, governing, worshipping) as normal and natural and that of others as strange and possibly inferior or even unnatural or inhuman. Of course, it seems like common sense to acknowledge that people feel more comfortable in their own social and cultural milieu, engaging in familiar and routine activities. Ethnocentrism is only dangerous when it is used to justify either verbal or physical attacks against other people. Governments, for example, often ethnocentrically justify their economic and military dominance over other peoples by claiming the natural superiority of their culture.

The ancient Romans, Chinese, Aztecs, Incas, and others similarly held themselves superior to the people they conquered. This tendency to view one's own cultural norms as superior to others was also prevalent in European colonialism and modern-day imperialist ventures.

ethnocentrism
The widespread human tendency to perceive the ways of doing things in one's own culture as normal and natural and that of others as strange, inferior, and possibly even unnatural or inhuman.

Cultural anthropologists study how refugees like these Somali Bantu adapt to American life and how American communities adapt to refugees.

Controversies

What Are the Limits of Cultural Relativism?

The controversial practice of female genital mutilation (FGM), or female circumcision, prevalent in twenty-eight countries in Africa and found in other regions as well, illustrates the uneasy relationship between cultural relativism and concern for individual human rights. FGM removes part or all of the external genitals of prepubescent girls. The procedure varies but usually entails the removal of the clitoris. In some areas, particularly in southern Egypt, Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Mali, it also includes *infibulation*—the stitching closed—of the vagina, leaving only a tiny opening for the passage of urine and menstrual blood. The United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women suggests that at least 100 million women living today have been subjected to FGM, whereas the World Health Organization (WHO) puts the number at more than 132 million women and girls in Africa alone, estimating also that about 2 million procedures are performed annually (Ras-Work 2006; Almroth et al. 2005). Although FGM is now sometimes performed in hospitals, local midwives usually perform the procedure, working with crude tools and without anesthesia on girls who are typically between 5 and 11 years old.

The two most common names by which the practice is known—female genital mutilation and *female circumcision*—reflect opposing attitudes toward it. Calling the practice female circumcision equates it with male circumcision, which is also debated but more widely accepted. The term *female genital mutilation* was introduced by the United Nations Inter-African Committee (IAC) on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children, a group established to help end the practice. This term reflects "the cruel and radical operation so many young girls are forced to undergo" involving "the removal of healthy organs" (Armstrong 1991, 42).

Although its exact origin is unknown, FGM predates both Christianity and Islam, and occurs among peoples of both faiths and among followers of traditional African religions. It is most common, however, in predominantly Islamic regions of Africa and is associated with strongly patriarchal cultures—that is, cultures that stress the subordination of women to male authority.

Medical risks for girls undergoing the procedure reportedly include pain, shock, loss of bladder and bowel control, and potentially fatal infections and hemorrhaging (Gruenbaum 1993). Infibulation, in particular, can have serious, painful, long-term consequences. Defenders of the procedure claim that there is no reliable evidence of it increasing a girl's risk of death or of excessive rates of medical complication. Opponents claim that FGM reduces a woman's capacity for sexual pleasure and that infibulation makes sexual intercourse and childbirth painful.

Groups who practice FGM defend it on cultural grounds. In their view, infibulation helps ensure a woman's premarital chastity and her sexual fidelity to her husband while increasing his sexual pleasure. Some prominent African women, such as Fuambai Ahmadu, an anthropologist from Sierra Leone, defend the practice. On the basis of her research, Ahmadu (2000, 304–05) views it as an emotionally positive validation of womanhood. In her interviews, African women reported that the practice did not diminish their sexual drive, inhibit sexual activity, or prevent sexual satisfaction, and that it did not adversely affect their health or birthing. The women looked forward to carrying on the tradition and initiating their younger female relatives into the pride of womanhood. Other local observers, such as Olayinka Koso-Thomas (1992), a physician from Sierra Leone, oppose the practice for its brutality, its dangerous consequences, and its role in perpetuating the subordination of women.

Some anthropologists, citing cultural relativism and the ideal of objectivity, do not support outside organizations that pressure African, Middle Eastern, and Indonesian governments to abolish FGM. Although they don't condone the procedure, they prefer to hope for change from within. Other anthropologists point out that although cultural relativism may help us understand a culture on its own terms, it can also help us understand how cultural beliefs reinforce inequalities by convincing people to accept practices that may be harmful and demeaning as natural.

Recent medical studies indicate multiple harmful effects of FGM. Research carried out by the WHO in six African countries concluded that, compared to women who have not had FGM, "deliveries to women who have undergone FGM are significantly more likely to be complicated by cesarean section, postpartum hemorrhage, tearing of the vaginal wall, extended maternal hospital stay, and inpatient perinatal death [infant mortality]" (WHO 2006, 1835). The study was conducted in hospitals, and outcomes for women who give birth at home might be even more negative because emergency medical treatment would not be available. Another medical study of women in Sudan reported that women who had undergone the most extensive types of FGM were the most likely to be infertile (Almroth et al. 2005, 390). Because fertility in women is highly valued, particularly in patriarchal cultures, the finding that FGM is a significant cause of infertility might be an effective argument against the procedure.

Many anthropologists, together with health workers, women's rights advocates, and human rights organizations, oppose FGM and are working to end it, with some success. In 1995, a United Nations–sponsored Conference on the Status of Women declared FGM to be a violation of human rights. In 1996, the U.S. Board of Immigration Appeals, ruling that FGM is a form of persecution, granted political asylum to a young woman from Togo who feared returning to her native country because she would be forced to undergo the procedure as a prelude to her arranged marriage (Dugger 1996, A1, B2).

In response to campaigns against FGM, sixteen African governments have outlawed it, and others have taken steps to limit its severity and improve the conditions under which it is performed (Ras-Work 2006, 10). These initiatives have not eradicated FGM. Still, recent reports indicate that some women who specialize in the procedure have decided not to continue performing it. For example, a grassroots organization called Womankind Kenya has persuaded influential practitioners to join their cause. Among the arguments they use are teachings from the Koran that some imams interpret as opposing FGM (Lacey 2004). The Inter-African Committee of the United Nations is also organizing around issues of religion, sponsoring conferences of Muslim and Christian religious leaders to speak out against FGM (Ras-Work 2006). Outreach programs are also training practitioners in other work, and are promoting messages about women's worthiness and the value of their bodies.

Critical Thinking Questions

Are there universal human rights? Who defines those rights? What are the benefits and risks of intervening in other people's ways of life?

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many Europeans assumed they represented the highest form of civilization, and ranked other societies beneath them according to how closely they approached middle-class European appearance, practices, and values. Early anthropologists, hardly immune to this pervasive ethnocentrism, developed evolutionary schemes that ranked people on a scale of progress from "savagery" to "civilization," with middle- and upper-class Europeans at the top.

To counter the influence of ethnocentrism, cultural anthropologists try to approach cultures from the viewpoint of **cultural relativism**. That is, they try to analyze a culture in terms of that culture, rather than in terms of the anthropologist's culture. This principle is central to cultural anthropology. For example, in the nineteenth century, native peoples of the Pacific Northwest of North America engaged in rituals called potlatches, which included feasting and giveaways of large amounts of food and personal and ceremonial property. Missionaries and officials in the United States and Canada considered these activities harmful, wasteful, and illogical because they contradicted Euro-American values that stress the importance of accumulating and saving wealth rather than giving away or destroying wealth. But anthropologists came to understand the economic and social significance of potlatches to the native peoples. We will discuss the meaning of potlatches in more detail later, but for now note that they effectively redistributed food and other goods to all members of a community. These displays of generosity also raised the social standing of the hosts because generosity, not accumulation, was a valued trait.

cultural relativism
An approach in anthropology that stresses the importance of analyzing cultures in each culture's own terms rather than in terms of the culture of the anthropologist. This does not mean, however, that all cultural behavior must be condoned.

Although cultural anthropologists usually take for granted the need to embrace cultural relativism in their work, there is debate about the extent to which it is possible to apply the principle. Anthropologists, like everyone else, are products of their own society. No matter how objective they try to be, their own cultural experience inevitably colors how they analyze and interpret the behavior of people in other cultures. Anthropologists need to acknowledge the potential effect of their own attitudes and values on the kinds of research problems they formulate and how they interpret other people's behavior.

Globalization
Globalization has included the spread of Western beliefs and values codified as laws on human rights.

Although cultural relativism requires anthropologists to try to understand other cultures on each culture's terms, it does not require them to abandon their own ethical standards or to condone oppressive practices. Cultural relativism, in other words, is not the same as **ethical relativism**, the acceptance of all ethical systems as equivalent to each other. Nevertheless, anthropologists have different views on the applicability of cultural and ethical relativism, as the Controversies feature on pages 8–9 illustrates. This is, and no doubt will continue to be, a topic of disagreement and controversy within the field.

ethical relativism
The belief that all rights and wrongs are relative to time, place, and culture, such that no moral judgments of behavior can be made.

Linguistic Anthropology

Linguistics, the study of language, is a separate academic discipline independent of anthropology. However, language is a key concern of anthropology. Not only is it a defining feature of all cultures, language is also the primary means by which we express culture and transmit it from one generation to the next.

linguistic anthropology
The study of language and communication, and the relationship between language and other aspects of culture and society.

Linguistic anthropology, discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, shares with linguistics an interest in the nature of language itself, but with an added focus on the interconnections among language, culture, and society. To gain insight into social categories, for example, linguistic anthropologists might investigate how people use language in different social contexts. Do people use a formal style of speech in one situation and an informal style in another? Do they vary words, pronunciation, and grammar in different social contexts? Do they speak differently to relatives and nonrelatives, friends and strangers, men and women, children and adults?

Some linguistic anthropologists study the languages of indigenous peoples to document their grammars and vocabularies. This is critical work because increasing globalization has led to the worldwide advancement of English and other languages of business, often to the detriment of local languages. In their attempts to keep pace with the new world order, and under pressure from globalizing economic and political forces, native peoples are losing their traditions, and their languages are becoming extinct.

Globalization

With the spread of the English language and other languages of business, globalization has endangered native languages as well as the ways of life those languages express.

Do you use words among friends that you would never use in a job interview, in class, or with children? What does your use of language reveal about your relationships to the people you address?

Many indigenous peoples are under pressure to abandon their own languages and adopt the official languages of the countries in which they find themselves. For example, in the United States and Canada, many indigenous languages have only a few speakers because of the intense pressures on native peoples to use English or French in place of their own languages. These social and political factors began under European colonialism, but they have continued in Canada and the United States. However, dozens of programs run by indigenous Americans and Canadians, and assisted by linguists, are now documenting and teaching indigenous languages so that they can be maintained and revitalized.

Linguistic anthropologists also document how language changes over time within a culture. And they are witnesses to how the expanding influence of a few globally spoken languages has reduced the number of indigenous languages spoken in the world. Endangered languages include Western languages as well, such as Gaelic (in both Scotland and Ireland), Breton (spoken in France), and Yiddish.

historical linguistics
The study of changes in language and communication over time and between peoples in contact.

Other linguistic anthropologists specialize in **historical linguistics**. Their work is based on the premise that people who speak related languages are culturally and historically related, descended from a common ancestral people. By looking at the relationships among languages in a large area, historical linguists can help determine how people have migrated to arrive in the territories they now occupy. For example, the Apaches in New Mexico, the Navajos in Arizona, and the Hupas of northern California all speak related languages, which are, in turn, related to a family of languages known as Athabascan. Most Athabascan speakers occupy a large area of western Canada and Alaska. These linguistic ties suggest that the Hupas, Navajos, and Apaches are all descended from Athabascan groups that migrated south from Canada.

When she died in 2008, Marie Smith Jones was the last speaker of Eyak, a Na-Dene language of Alaska.

By studying how people have borrowed words and grammatical patterns from other languages, historical linguists can also gain insight into how groups

In Their Own Voices

Why Save Our Languages?

In this excerpt, Richard Littlebear describes some of the reasons that his Native Cheyenne language is threatened with loss and suggests some ways to keep it from dying. Littlebear is a member of the Cheyenne nation and a teacher of the Cheyenne language.

Why save our languages, since they now seem to have no political, economic, or global relevance? That is exactly the reason why we should save our languages, because it is the spiritual relevance deeply embedded in our languages that makes them relevant to us as American Indians today.

If we just spoke them, all of our languages would be healthier; but that is not what's happening. We do not speak our languages, and our languages are dying. We are also confronted with a voracious language, English, that gobbles up everything in its way.

The Cheyenne people began making the change to a different type of culture and to a written language about a century ago. Those of us who speak the Cheyenne language are quite possibly the last generation able to joke in our own language.

A second idea is that language is the basis of sovereignty. We have all the attributes that constitute sovereign nations: a governance structure, law and order, jurisprudence, literature, a land base, spiritual and sacred practices, and that one attribute that holds all of these others together—our languages.

A third idea is that of protocol in the language used in ceremonies. The dilemma is that the people who have the right to use that vocabulary and language, and who have done the rituals, are dying. The loss of this specialized language will become a major obstacle in retaining the full richness of our languages and cultures.

We need to make our children see our languages and cultures as viable and just as valuable as anything they see on television, in movies, or on videos.

In closing, I want to relate an experience I had in Alaska. I met Marie Smith Jones, the last Native speaker of the Eyak language. It was truly a profoundly moving experience for me. I felt that I was sitting in the presence of a whole universe of knowledge that could be gone in one last breath. That's how fragile that linguistic universe seemed. It was really difficult for me to stop talking to her, because I wanted to remember every moment of our encounter.

I do not want any more of our languages to have that experience of having one last speaker. I want all of our languages to last forever, to always be around to nurture our children, to bolster their identities, to perpetuate our cultures.

The Cheyenne language is my language. English is also my language. Yet it is Cheyenne that I want to use when my time is completed here on this earth and journey on to the spirit world.

(Source: Just Speak Your Language, Richard Littlebear, in *Native American Voices: A Reader*, 3rd edition (eds. Susan Lobo, Steve Talbot, Traci Morris), Prentice-Hall, pp. 90–92. 2010. Used with permission of Richard Littlebear.)

Critical Thinking Question

How does Richard Littlebear's story illustrate the perspectives that cultural anthropology can bring to the study of people and their ways of life?

have interacted over time. Combined with archaeological evidence, these kinds of analyses can produce a rich picture of the historical relationship among peoples who otherwise left no written records, contributing to our understanding of the processes of culture change.

Archaeology

Archaeology is the study of material culture. Its methods apply to both historic cultures, those with written records, and prehistoric cultures, those that predate the invention of writing. Archaeologists have also applied their methods to living societies, a subfield called ethnoarchaeology, with sometimes surprising results.

Unlike cultural anthropologists, who can interact with and talk to living people, archaeologists rely mostly on evidence from material culture and the sites where people lived. Such evidence includes, among many other things, the tools that people made and used, the clothing and ornaments they wore, the buildings they lived and worked in, the remains of the plants and animals they relied on, and how they buried their dead.

archaeology
The study of past cultures, both historic cultures with written records and prehistoric cultures that predate the invention of writing.

These 3.6-million-year-old tracks of hominids walking through an ashfall from a distant volcanic eruption in Tanzania are the first evidence of fully bipedal locomotion in ancient humans.

This kind of evidence can reveal how people lived in the past. The remains of small, temporary encampments, for example, might indicate that the people who used them foraged their food. If the encampment had a lot of stone debris, it was likely used as a workshop for making stone tools. A settlement with permanent dwellings near farmable land and irrigation canals would have been inhabited by agriculturalists.

Judging from the density of settlements and household refuse like fragments of pots, archaeologists can estimate the population of a region at a particular time. The size and distribution of dwellings in a settlement or region can reveal aspects of a society's social structure. If a few of the houses in a settlement are much larger than most others, if they contain many more objects than other dwellings, especially luxury items, archaeologists can conclude that some people were wealthier than others. In contrast, if all of the houses are more or less the same size and contain similar types and amounts of possessions, archaeologists can infer that all of the people lived in more or less the same fashion and were probably of equal status.

Skeletal remains can provide similar clues to social structure. Archaeologists working at a site in Peru called Chavín de Huántar, which flourished from around 800 B.C. to 200 B.C., found evidence from skeletons that indicated that the people living close to the site's center ate better than those who lived on its margins. This evidence, combined with similar findings from other sites, suggests that Chavín society was becoming more stratified—that is, divided into classes (Burger 1992a; 1992b).

Archaeologists can also tell us about people's relationships with members of other communities. In much of the world, indigenous trading networks supplied people with goods and products not found in their own territories. Archaeologists can reconstruct these trading networks by studying the distribution of trade goods in relation to their place of origin. Similar evidence also can trace migrations, warfare, and conquests.

Written records add enormously to our understanding of the past, but they do not replace the need for archaeology. Archaeology provides a richer understanding of how people lived and worked than do documents alone. People write and keep records about what is important to them. Because the elite members of a society are usually those who are literate, the historical record is more likely to reflect their interests and points of view than those of poor and marginal people. Archaeology can help correct those biases. In 1991, construction in lower Manhattan in New York City uncovered the five-acre African Burial Ground containing the remains of 10,000 to 20,000 enslaved and free African Americans. Archaeologists were able to determine the diets, health, and causes of death of many of the people buried there, documenting the role slavery played in New York City in the early eighteenth century, a feature of urban life previously not well known (Encyclopedia of New York State 2008).

What might an analysis of refuse reveal about life in a dormitory?

Archaeological methods can help address important issues in contemporary societies. In the 1970s, the archaeologist William Rathje founded the Arizona Garbage Project to study what Americans throw away and what happens to this refuse. Rathje defined archaeology as the discipline that learns from garbage (Rathje and Murphy, 1992). Among the surprising findings, fast-food packaging actually makes up less than 1 percent of the volume of American landfills, contrary to popular opinion and the estimates of experts. Compacted paper takes up the most space.

Archaeology's great chronological depth—from humanity's origins millions of years ago to twenty-first-century landfills—makes it particularly suited to the study of culture change. Theories of culture change are one of the discipline's main concerns.

For example, many archaeologists are interested in the processes that led to the first cities thousands of years ago, and with them the first states—societies with centralized governments, administrative bureaucracies, and inequalities of wealth and power.

Biological Anthropology

Biological, or **physical, anthropology** is the study of human origins and contemporary biological diversity. In the popular imagination, the study of human origins, or **paleoanthropology**, is probably the most visible face of biological anthropology. Paleoanthropologists seek to decipher the fossil record—the usually fragmentary remains of human forebears and related animals—to understand human evolution. Paleoanthropologists have also turned to the science of genetics and the study of DNA for clues to human origins.

biological, or physical, anthropology
The study of human origins and contemporary biological diversity.

paleoanthropology
The study of the fossil record, especially skeletal remains, to understand the process and products of human evolution.

Humans are primates; we belong, in other words, to the same order of animals that includes monkeys and apes. DNA evidence indicates that we share a common ancestry with gorillas and chimpanzees—our closest living relatives—and that our evolutionary line separated from theirs in Africa between 5 million and 8 million years ago. Working from fossil evidence, paleoanthropologists are reconstructing the complex course of human evolution. They study changes in the environment in which our ancestors emerged millions of years ago to understand the adaptive benefits of the physical changes they underwent. They study the size and structure of teeth to learn about our ancestors' diets. And they study the distribution of fossils worldwide to learn how and when our ancestors migrated out of Africa and populated most of Earth.

A reconstruction of "Lucy," an early hominid who lived some 3.2 million years ago.

Once humans began to create clothes, shelters, and tools appropriate for environments from the Arctic to the tropics, they no longer depended exclusively on their physical characteristics for survival. With language and more complex social organization, they could enhance group survival. Thus, paleoanthropologists are particularly interested in clues to the emergence of human culture. Here their interests and methods overlap with those of archaeologists as they excavate sites looking for evidence of early toolmaking in association with fossils.

Some physical anthropologists study nonhuman primates to gain insight into the nature of our own species. The primatologist Jane Goodall, for example, spent years observing the behavior of chimpanzees in the wild, and her discoveries about their social behavior have a bearing on the origins of our own social behavior. Goodall also found that chimpanzees can make and use rudimentary tools.

In addition to human origins and primate social behavior, physical anthropologists also study the interaction of biology, culture, and environment to understand humanity's current biological diversity. For example, the Inuit, an indigenous people of Arctic Canada, have developed ways to clothe and shelter themselves to survive in their harsh environment, but they also appear to have a greater rate of blood flow to their bodily extremities in response to cold than other people do (Itoh 1980; McElroy and Townsend 1989, 26–29). Indigenous inhabitants of the Andes Mountains in South

Globalization

The global spread of humans was made possible by the evolution of the capacity for culture and the development and spread of the first tool traditions.

America have a greater than average lung capacity, which is an adaptation to the low oxygen levels of their high-altitude environment. And people from regions rich in dairy products are genetically adapted to digest milk easily, whereas adults from regions where milk is not a traditional part of the diet are not. These lactase-deficient adults have digestive problems when they drink milk. Skin color also is in part an adaptation to climatic conditions and exposure to sun, as darker skin has a higher content of melanin, a substance that protects against overabsorption of the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays (Rensberger 2001, 83). We discuss the social significance and interpretation of skin color further in Chapter 13.

medical anthropology

A discipline that bridges cultural and biological anthropology, focusing on health and disease in human populations.

The subfield of **medical anthropology** focuses on health and disease in human populations. Medical anthropologists investigate the susceptibilities or resistances of populations to specific diseases. They also trace the spread of diseases within a population and from one population to another. Before the arrival of the first Europeans and Africans in South and North America in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for example, smallpox, measles, and other infectious diseases were unknown. As a result, Native Americans, unlike the newcomers, had no natural immunity to the diseases. The results were catastrophic; once exposed to the diseases, millions of Native Americans died.

In contrast to the vulnerabilities of indigenous peoples of the Americas, some populations have advantageous resistances to diseases endemic in their areas, as the following case study investigates.

[[Medical anthropology is not only a subfield of biological anthropology but can also be understood as a discipline related to cultural anthropology. In addition to studying the biological aspects of disease, medical anthropologists also investigate cultural concepts of health and illness, including people's differing understandings of what causes disease and what methods might best be used to treat it. Medical anthropologists often make a distinction between "disease" and "illness," using the former term to denote biological etiology and the latter term to refer to the cultural conceptions of causation and the holistic understanding of the patient's condition including his or her physical state, the reactions that other people have to the patient, the patient's prognosis, and perhaps the spiritual changes that are taking place.]]

Case Study

Environment, Adaptation, and Disease: Malaria and Sickle-Cell Anemia in Africa and the United States

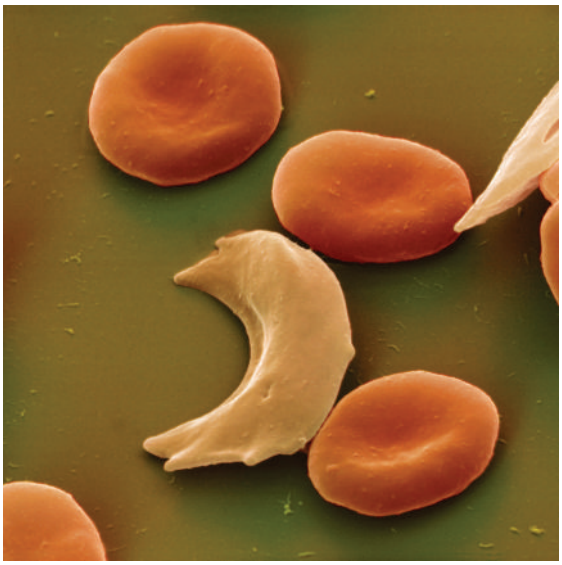
Study of the incidence of two diseases, malaria and sickle-cell anemia, demonstrates how the processes of biological adaptation and culture change can interact to affect human health.

Sickle-cell anemia is a genetic disease that causes red blood cells to have a sickle shape rather than their normal disk shape. Sickled cells cannot hold and transport oxygen normally. Because the disease can be fatal in those who have inherited the recessive gene from both parents, one might expect that the sickle-cell trait would naturally die out in a population. However, individuals who carry one dominant and one recessive copy of the gene survive and also happen to have immunity from another disease—malaria. Malaria is an infectious disease spread by the Anopheles mosquito. Both diseases are extremely debilitating and potentially fatal. And both are endemic to West Africa, the ancestral homeland of most African Americans.

The genetic trait that causes sickle-cell anemia probably evolved in human populations in West Africa about 2,400 years ago (Edelstein 1986). At the time, dense forests covered much of West Africa. The inhabitants had lived for millennia by hunting and collecting wild plants. The Anopheles mosquito was present; however, because it breeds in unshaded pools of standing water, the mostly shady conditions of the forest kept its numbers in check.

Around 2,000 years ago, however, farming peoples from East Africa began to filter into West Africa, displacing the indigenous population and clearing forestlands for their fields. This created the open areas with standing pools of water in which the Anopheles

What does this analysis of sickle-cell anemia and malaria suggest about the relationships between biological and cultural factors in human health?



By not transporting oxygen properly and clogging organs, sickled red blood cells cause lifelong, potentially life-threatening health problems for people with this genetic disorder.

mosquito thrives (Foster and Anderson 1978). As farming spread, so did malaria. As the human population and its cattle herds increased, so did the mosquito population and malaria.

Those who inherit the sickle-cell gene from one parent gain some resistance to malaria, which lessens the severity of the infection. As a result, the sickle-cell gene has spread in malaria-stricken areas. An estimated 30 percent of West African farmers carry the gene. The lowest incidence of the gene is among those who live in still-forested peripheral areas of West Africa, where the Anopheles mosquito and malaria are also less prevalent.

The adaptive advantage of the sickle-cell trait, then, is high in populations that live in areas where malaria is prevalent but is lower for those who live where the disease is less common. In the United States, where malaria is rare, people of West African descent have higher rates of the sickle-cell gene than do non-Africans, but their rates are much lower than among West Africans.

If the cultural practice of farming helped spread malaria in West Africa, diet may contribute to the adaptive advantage of the sickle-cell gene. Common crops grown in Africa and the West Indies, including cassava (manioc), yams, sorghum, millet, sugarcane, and lima beans, reduce the severity of the symptoms of sickle-cell anemia because they contain chemical compounds that interfere with the sickling of the red blood cells. This may explain why a lower percentage of Africans suffer from sickle-cell anemia than do African Americans, even though more West Africans have the sickle-cell gene. A study revealed that Jamaicans with sickle-cell anemia had relatively mild symptoms when they lived in Jamaica and ate a Jamaican diet, but experienced more severe symptoms when they migrated to the United States or Britain and changed their eating habits (Frisancho 1981).

REVIEW Anthropology has four subfields: cultural anthropology, linguistic anthropology, archaeology, and biological (or physical) anthropology. Because we all are prone to be ethnocentric, cultural anthropologists adopt other methods of ethnography and the perspective of cultural relativism to avoid being judgmental of other cultures. The work of linguistic anthropologists and archaeologists sheds light on culture change, and subdisciplines such as medical anthropology combine biological and cultural anthropology.

Applied Anthropology

1.3 Articulate how applied anthropology relates to the four main subfields of anthropology.

applied anthropology
An area of anthropology that applies the techniques and theories of the field to problem solving outside of traditional academic settings.

forensic anthropologists
Biological anthropologists who analyze human remains in the service of criminal justice and families of disaster victims.

cultural resource management (CRM)
The application of archaeology to preserve and protect historic structures and prehistoric sites.

contract archaeology
The application of archaeology to assess the potential impact of construction on archaeological sites and to salvage archaeological evidence.

Globalization
Anthropology-based advocacy centers focus on protecting and preserving the native cultures of small-scale societies from the impacts of globalizaion.

How might Western pharmaceutical companies employ the services of anthropologists?

Applied anthropology intersects with and draws from the four major subfields. Indeed, many anthropologists regard applied anthropology as a fifth subfield of anthropology. Applied anthropologists employ anthropological understandings and perspectives to work outside traditional academic settings. For example, some biological anthropologists work as **forensic anthropologists**, applying their knowledge of human anatomy to help solve crimes. Working for police departments, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and other law enforcement agencies, forensic anthropologists can help determine the cause of death by examining a victim's remains and the physical evidence found at a crime scene. Forensic anthropologists' knowledge of skeletal anatomy, blood types, and biochemical markers in the blood can also help identify a victim and provide leads to help apprehend suspects. Forensic anthropologists have also been asked to study human remains for evidence of human rights abuses that occur during wars and civil conflicts.

Many government agencies, such as the FBI's behavioral science unit, the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (ViCAP), employ forensic anthropologists. Forensic anthropologists and archaeologists also work for the Central Identification Laboratory—Hawaii (CILHI). Members of CILHI have traveled to Vietnam and Korea to find the remains of downed airplanes in attempts to identify people missing in action (MIAs) from the Vietnam and Korean wars. Forensic anthropologists also helped identify remains of victims of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City.

Applied archaeology has grown with federal and state laws that protect archaeological sites and materials, which has led to the creation of the field of **cultural resource management (CRM)**. Laws now require archaeological surveys in advance of many highway and other construction projects to assess their impact on archaeological sites. The need for these assessments has given rise to **contract archaeology**, in which archaeologists are hired to do this kind of research.

Archaeologists' findings about the past can also be used to solve contemporary problems. Archaeologists working around Lake Titicaca in the Andes of South America, for example, discovered an ancient and productive method of cultivation that had fallen into disuse. They helped reintroduce this method to local farmers, which substantially increased their yields.

Some linguistic anthropologists apply their skills to preserve indigenous languages. They may work with native speakers to prepare dictionaries, grammars, and other aids for use in language classes and schools. Their work helps indigenous communities counter the rapid decline in the number of people who speak local languages. Collecting data from speakers of endangered languages is a fieldwork priority for linguistic anthropologists.

Cultural anthropologists complete applied anthropology work in nonacademic settings, such as government agencies, nongovernment organizations, charitable foundations, and private companies. Some help shape the policies of city, state, and federal agencies that deliver services to local communities; for example, they may advise on the best ways to contact different populations in a community to deliver services. These may be health care services, such as vaccinations, legal aid services, or preschool and other educational opportunities for children. Cultural anthropologists work in research firms and think tanks to solve social problems. They also help communities, companies, and organizations to resolve management disputes and conflicts. They help resolve labor and workplace issues and work for courts to develop and implement alternative sentencing programs for offenders.

Anthropologists may act as advocates and testify in courts to support native claims to land or other benefits or rights, and may help indigenous people present their history and culture from a native perspective. Cultural Survival, for example, helps native peoples in Ecuador, Peru, and Brazil protect their interests in the face of globalization.

Medical anthropologists may help preserve traditional medical practices and pharmaceuticals, and encourage practitioners of both traditional and Western medicine to understand the physical and psychological benefits of both medical models for developing treatment procedures that combine both forms of medicine.

Anthropologists who work for industries and corporations analyze workplace interactions to suggest improvements in the working environment and worker productivity. Anthropologists may provide sensitivity training for American businesspeople planning to meet overseas with their foreign counterparts. Anthropologists even study consumer habits to help companies increase sales or develop new products and services. For example, Canon employed a team of anthropologists to study the kinds of pictures and notes that families create and affix to their walls and refrigerators. The company used the findings to develop Canon Creative software, which allows families to make their own greeting cards, posters, and T-shirts, and thus increased printer sales (Hafner 1999).

REVIEW Applied anthropology is the practical use of all four subfields of anthropology outside academia. Applied anthropology includes forensic anthropologists, workers in cultural resource management, contract archaeologists, and linguistic and cultural anthropologists. All applied anthropologists use their training in other fields of anthropology.

Anthropology Applied

Cultural Survival

Cultural anthropologists sometimes help indigenous communities improve their economic conditions, adapt to change, and preserve their traditions. They help communities find ways to use their resources productively while protecting their environment and cultural heritage. Some anthropologists have also helped protect indigenous peoples' rights to land and resources and their right to continue cultural practices.

Cultural Survival is an organization founded by anthropologists that promotes the rights, voices, and visions of indigenous peoples around the world. The organization deals with conflict and migration, cultural preservation, improvement of health care, indigenous economic enterprises, law and self-determination, and the preservation of natural resources. Its initiatives include publications to publicize issues and share news, indigenous curricula, fair trade stores and exchanges such as the Coffee Alliance, legal defense, and an indigenous action network.

Not all applied anthropology concerns native peoples and their cultural survival, however. Some cultural anthropologists advise government agencies and private companies on how to overcome resistance from indigenous and rural communities to policies and projects that benefit national governments and private concerns but threaten indigenous rights and resources.

Critical Thinking Question

How can anthropological research affect public policy, private enterprise, and advocacy for indigenous peoples?

Chapter Summary

The Study of Humanity

1.1 Explain the core concepts that distinguish anthropology from other disciplines.

- Anthropology is the study of humanity, from its evolutionary origins millions of years ago to today's worldwide diversity of peoples and cultures.
- Three features distinguish anthropology from other social sciences: a focus on the concept of culture, a holistic perspective, and a comparative perspective.
- Culture is the constellation of learned values, beliefs, and rules of conduct that members of a society share. Culture change and globalization are important subjects of anthropological research.
- Anthropology's holistic perspective focuses on culture as an integrated whole, the various features and patterns of which can only be understood in relation to one another.
- Anthropology's comparative perspective is based on cultural data drawn from societies throughout the world and from throughout human history, documenting the diversity of human culture in an attempt to understand common patterns in people's adaptations to their environments and their unique cultural institutions.

The Four Subfields of Anthropology

1.2 Describe the four subfields of anthropology.

- Cultural anthropology is the comparative study of living and recent cultures. Cultural anthropologists use ethnographic fieldwork and the perspective of cultural relativism.
- Linguistic anthropology is the study of language in its cultural and historical context. It includes the study of languages of indigenous peoples, language change, and the relationships between language and other aspects of culture, thought, and belief.
- Archaeology is the study of past cultures. Archaeologists study historic cultures with written records and prehistoric cultures whose lives can be inferred from material artifacts, settlement patterns, and remains of foods and tools.
- Biological anthropology is the study of human origins, using the fossil record to understand human evolution. Some biological anthropologists study the biological diversity of contemporary human populations.

Applied Anthropology

1.3 Articulate how applied anthropology relates to the four main subfields of anthropology.

- Applied anthropology intersects with and draws from all of the major subdisciplines in anthropology to study and help solve contemporary problems in communities, government, and businesses.

Review Questions

1. What features distinguish anthropology from other social and behavioral sciences? Why are the concepts of culture and culture change important in anthropology?
2. Why is globalization a major concern in anthropology today? How does culture change relate to globalization?
3. Why does anthropology use the holistic and comparative perspectives?
4. How do each of the four subfields of anthropology seek to fulfill anthropology's mission?
5. How do cultural anthropologists conduct research? What are some of the goals they try to achieve?
6. Why is cultural relativism important in studying other cultures? How does cultural relativism differ from ethical relativism?
7. What can linguistic anthropologists and archaeologists learn about symbolic and material culture?
8. How do diseases like sickle-cell anemia and malaria highlight the relationship between biology and culture?
9. How can research in each of the subfields of anthropology help solve problems and make policy?

Chapter 2

The Nature of Culture

Learning Objectives

2.1 Articulate how anthropologists understand the concept of culture.

2.2 Explain the extent to which culture is shared, learned, adaptive, integrated, and symbolic.

2.3 Illustrate the internal and external processes that produce culture change.

2.4 Describe the cultural consequences of globalization.

At the beginning there was on the earth only a single man; he had neither house nor tent, for at that time the winter was not cold, and the summer was not hot; the wind did not blow so violently, and there fell neither snow nor rain; the tea grew of itself on the mountains, and the flocks had nothing to fear from beasts of prey. This man had three children, who lived a long time with him, nourishing themselves on milk and fruits. After having attained to a great age, this man died. The three children

deliberated what they should do with the body of their father, and they could not agree about it; one wished to put him in a coffin, the other wanted to burn him, the third thought it would be best to expose the body on the summit of a mountain. They resolved then to divide it into three parts. The eldest had the body and arms; he was the ancestor of the great Chinese family, and that is why his descendants have become celebrated in arts and industry, and are remarkable for their tricks and stratagems. The second son had the breast; he was the father of the Tibetan family, and they are full of heart and courage, and do not fear death. From the third, who had inferior parts of the body, are descended the Tartars, who are simple and timid, without head or heart, and who know nothing but how to keep themselves firm in their saddles.

Source: From David L. Snellgrove and Hugh Richardson, *A Cultural History of Tibet.* © 2003 Orchid Press.

This Tibetan narrative, which describes the origin of the Tibetan people and two ethnic groups who live near them, tells us much about Tibetan attitudes toward themselves and other peoples. These attitudes are part of the core of Tibetan culture, that is, Tibetans' understanding of the world, its origins, and the people who inhabit it. In the beginning, the story depicts the world as an idyllic, peaceful place, without harsh weather and hardship. The Tibetans and their neighbors descend from the same founder. But the story also tells us what qualities the Tibetans believe differentiate them from others. They praise the Chinese for their arts and accomplishments but disapprove of their trickery. They are disparaging and condescending toward the Tartars. And they think of themselves as people of courage and kindness.

The narrative also gives us information about burial practices. Each brother advocated a method of burial that is practiced in different societies around the world: interment in the ground, cremation, and exposure to the elements. These practices are aspects of culture, how people organize their lives. The story thus provides insight into features of Tibetan culture. We learn about how Tibetans view themselves and their neighbors, how they think about their relationships with other groups, and some practices they engage in. In this chapter, we will explore what culture is and how cultural practices and attitudes change.

What Is Culture?

2.1 Articulate how anthropologists understand the concept of culture.

To what extent is culture shared? For example, what could you say about "American" attitudes toward self and others and "American" ways of organizing life?

Chapter 1 proposed a basic definition of culture: the behaviors, values, and attitudes shared by a group of people. This chapter expands on this definition. Although defining what culture is may sound like a simple task, anthropologists have struggled to define and specify culture since the late nineteenth century, when anthropology was established as a discipline. The British social anthropologist Edward Tylor was the first to attempt a formal definition. Writing in *Primitive Culture* in 1871, he stated, "Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."

Tylor's definition captures several significant features that most current definitions of culture include. It focuses on the holistic quality of culture ("that complex whole") and embraces all the activities, attitudes, and beliefs of human beings. Significantly, these are traits people "acquire." That is, people's attitudes, beliefs, and ways of acting are learned rather than inherited, instinctual, or automatic. Finally, Tylor stressed that people acquire culture "as a member of society." People live and interact with other people, learning skills and attitudes from them, and in turn transmitting their knowledge and beliefs to others.

Since Tylor, anthropologists have expanded on and refined the definition of culture innumerable times. By the 1950s, Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn had collected more than one hundred definitions, and all differ according to their focus and the theoretical orientation that underlies them (Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952). Nevertheless, all the definitions include statements about human behavior and activities

in families, groups, and communities, and about people's selectively shared knowledge, attitudes, values, and beliefs.

Anthropologists use the term "culture" in two distinct senses (Sewell 2008, 42). In one meaning, "culture" refers to a set of beliefs and practices that are analyzed and abstracted from people's actual lived experiences. The second meaning of "culture" refers to a particular identifiable group of people (a "society") who, to varying degrees, share or participate in social life.

Cultural knowledge refers to the information people have that enables them to function in their social and physical environments. Some of this information is practical—how to make a living, what kinds of clothes to wear and shelters to build, and so on. Other cultural knowledge is less obvious—for example, people share knowledge about the world, why people do the things they do, and what a person can expect from others. This kind of cultural knowledge is expressed in people's attitudes, values, and beliefs, including ethical values about what is right and wrong and what is proper and improper behavior. Cultural knowledge thus includes religious beliefs and scientific theories about the past, the world, people and their origins, and people's relationships to plants, animals, and the natural world.

The cultural knowledge of these Sami includes everything there is to know about reindeer, living in the Arctic, and coping with citizenship in the modern state society of Norway.

cultural knowledge
Information that enables people to function in their society and contributes to the survival of the society as a whole.

In addition to cultural knowledge, social and cultural skills, such as the activities and practices that people engage in to obtain their food, clothe and shelter themselves, and make or procure goods needed for their households, are included in the definition of culture. Cultural behaviors include the ways that people organize themselves to provide leadership, make decisions, and carry out communal activities. In all societies, people need to develop modes of subsistence and economic exchange, methods of social control and conflict resolution, and principles of leadership and governance. They need to organize families and provide for child care and socialization. Other aspects of culture, such as religion and artistic expression, are also part of the human experience. People share similar basic societal needs with members of other societies, but the strategies and institutions they develop to satisfy or cope with those needs vary.

Thus, people in all societies have their own specific thoughts (cultural knowledge) and behaviors (cultural skills) that vary from group to group. Although each society is unique, they all share similarities with others. In today's world, cultural influences are spreading in the context of global processes that include ways of organizing economies, purchasing goods and services, and communicating through the arts, travel, and the Internet. Elements of this global culture emanate from many parts of the world. Although Europe and the United States provide powerful centers for this global culture, economic, political, and artistic influences also come from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Rapidly changing means of communication, especially through the Internet, allow for both the spread of global culture and the resistance to its homogenizing effects. We will explore these issues in greater detail throughout this text.

What is global culture? This question is widely debated among social scientists. What thoughts, behaviors, tools, and skills do you identify as making up today's global culture?

REVIEW Culture includes cultural knowledge (people's ideas, attitudes, beliefs, and values) and cultural skills (people's activities and behaviors for living and organizing their lives). People's thoughts and behaviors are mutually reinforcing. Some aspects of culture deal with concrete knowledge, such as what food to eat, how to build a shelter, and what clothes to wear. Other aspects of culture deal with abstract ideas, such as how people are expected to behave, what attitudes are appropriate in given situations, and value systems. Concrete and abstract components of culture and their behavioral analogs are present in all human societies. Though each culture is unique, a developing and expanding global culture also spreads economic, political, and aesthetic influences throughout the world.

Characteristics of Culture

2.2 Explain the extent to which culture is shared, learned, adaptive, integrated, and symbolic.

Although each society is unique, a number of characteristics in their organization and functioning are universal. To begin, any culture is a product of a group of people who share and transmit some basic attitudes and assumptions about the world. In addition, aspects of culture tend to interrelate and function together with some consistency to form a coherent system of behaviors and beliefs. Through their cultures, people adapt to their life situations and to changes in their social and physical environments. Anthropologists often state that culture is shared, learned, adaptive, and integrated. And although these general principles make sense, as we shall see, they are not entirely unproblematic. Perhaps we can also state that cultures consist of a constellation of shared meanings and that these meanings are reflected in and reinforced by the behaviors in which people engage. Furthermore, meaning is both produced and interpreted by members in their interactions with one another. That is, culture is both meaning and practice. [[However, as anthropologists interested in the lived experience of peoples, we remain mindful of the ways in which the principles of sharing, learning, adapting, and integrating cultural beliefs and practices are not fully realized. Not all members of a society share normative cultural values or engage in normative cultural practices, either because they disagree with or resist these norms or because they are systematically barred from participating. The ways in which people learn attitudes and behaviors may vary among different segments of the society, again because they resist or because they are not permitted to engage. And not all values or practices are adaptive or integrated in a neat unproblematic way.]]

Culture Is Shared

Humans are by nature social creatures; that is, we do not live as individuals alone. Rather, we live with other people in families, households, and communities of various sizes and relationships. The way we behave, our attitudes about right and wrong, and our ideas about the world we live in are all formed through our interactions with others. We do not act alone, and we do not have ideas all to ourselves. Together with these other people, we are societies. As defined in Chapter 1, a society is a group of people who live within an acknowledged territory, who could potentially interact with one another, and who share certain practices and values. Societies are held together by social structures that organize family life, means of making a living, and ways of arriving at decisions and establishing methods of leadership.

To say that culture is shared is not to say that all members of a particular society have exactly the same attitudes and do exactly the same things in the same way. Rather, the general principles of culture may be shared but there may be many differences in how people experience and think about their lives. For example, not all Americans vote or believe that voting is efficacious, but most would staunchly defend everyone's right to vote. Thus, voting is included in the broad cultural conception of legitimate governance in the United States.

Societies can function as groups to minimize conflicts because their members agree about the basic parameters of living. If this were not so, people would not be able to coordinate their activities or agree on what to do next. And even though they might speak the same language, they would not be able to accurately interpret each other's meanings and intentions if they did not share basic cultural assumptions about the world. These shared assumptions, or **cultural models**, form a background ideology in terms of which behavior becomes relatively coherent and consistent.

cultural models
Shared assumptions that people have about the world and about the ideal culture.

Despite cultural models, there are disagreements and conflicts within any community. In all communities, some people are more fully committed to general societal norms than others. Societal **norms** are sets of commonly held expectations and

norms
Sets of expectations and attitudes that people have about appropriate behavior.

attitudes that people have about appropriate behavior. Although these norms are generally held to be valid within each culture, not everyone acts in accordance with them.

Deviance from expected and appropriate behavior occurs in every community. Some types of deviance are tolerated whereas others are not. In fact, behavior that may be considered deviant within a community as a whole may be a marker of identity for a particular group. For example, body piercings or tattooing might violate adult conceptions of beauty, but teenagers may engage in these physical alterations to conform to youthful standards. Violent behavior such as assault and murder are deviant acts that are not tolerated in most societies. Other kinds of violence that occur within the family, though, such as spousal abuse, may be tolerated, even if they are not condoned.

This woman was photographed in traditional Burkina Faso garb with her niece.

People occupying different social roles and statuses may hold opposing views about the existing social order and prevailing cultural norms. For example, age may be a factor in the way people organize their lives and in the kinds of attitudes that they hold. Younger and older people have different experiences and different frames of reference. Opposing activities and norms for older and younger people may be relatively stable, though; that is, as younger people age, they adopt the lifestyles and norms of their elders. Differences between the young and the old may also signal ongoing social and culture change, if young people introduce new ways of living as they replace their elders through the normal aging process.

Gender differences are another common source of distinctions in people's activities and attitudes. Issues of gender will be explored in depth in Chapter 11, but here we can note that gender is a complex cultural concept through which people assign particular roles and convey particular attitudes. Gender as a social construct differs from sex, which is a biological attribute. In most societies, women and men usually have certain specific tasks that they fulfill in their homes and communities. The relationships between men and women in the family and in the public sphere influence the ways they experience their lives. For example, men and women are likely to have different ideas about their rights and responsibilities, depending on which gender is the dominant decision-maker and authority in the household. Women who have the major share of the household and child-rearing responsibilities may feel burdened and restricted, or they may feel challenged and fulfilled. In societies that sanction violence against women and permit men to abuse their wives, women's experience of household life certainly contrasts sharply with men's.

Like differences in age and gender, other status differences in society result in incomplete sharing of culture. Such differences also may be a source of social tension and cultural disagreement. For example, members of elite groups may reap greater economic and social benefits from the way in which society is structured than do members of marginalized or oppressed groups. Although differences of experiences, attitudes, and opinions vary within all societies, such differences are likely to be sharper in complex, heterogeneous societies than in small, relatively homogeneous ones where people interact more personally with one another. Class, race, or ethnicity may segment large societies, creating group cultural distinctions in how people organize their lives. In addition, people who belong to different religions may apply different philosophical orientations and moral principles to their daily lives.

Thus, members of different groups in stratified societies may have different attitudes and values. For example, when economists and politicians in the United States tell us that the economy is booming, this does not mean that everyone is doing well. The wealthy and those who own shares on the stock market experience an economic

Hasidic families form an American urban subculture in New York City. Their subculture is distinguished through ethnic background and religious beliefs and practices.

boom very differently from workers whose factories have been relocated abroad, or from people on welfare. Thus, a culture is not fully shared in a diverse society.

Differences in social groups and in the ways that members of distinct groups live may remain relatively stable for long periods of time. However, tensions and struggles over cultural norms and values may lead to significant societal changes.

In addition to differences derived from distinct social roles and statuses, some societies contain groups that participate in identifiable subcultures. A **subculture** is a group of people who think of themselves, and are thought of by others, as different in a significant way from the majority of people living in the society. Members of subcultures interact more frequently among themselves than with "outsiders," and they share attitudes and practices that distinguish them from other groups.

subculture
A group whose members and others think of their way of life as different in some significant way from that of other people in the larger society.

In complex, multiethnic societies, including American society, ethnic groups may comprise subcultures, especially if members retain allegiance to their native country, use their native language, and observe ethnic food, preferences, and family relations. Some occupational groups may also function as subcultures. For example, police officers may work and socialize together, have shared vocabulary, and share expectations of life patterns, cooperation, and mutual aid.

All of these sources of difference modify our understanding of culture as a constellation of shared behaviors and beliefs. Still, when people interact within the same society, they must share some basic premises about social order and social values. If they did not, community cohesion would disintegrate, and the groups within the society would separate.

Culture Is Learned

Culture is transmitted from generation to generation and is learned mainly in childhood and during maturation. We learn not only our behavior but also our attitudes and values. The ability to acquire culture in this way makes humans highly adaptable to different cultural environments. Humans are born with the potential to learn whatever knowledge and skills are practiced in their communities. They do this through the process of **enculturation**—learning one's culture through informal observation and formal instruction, beginning in earliest childhood. Children learn the culture that they are exposed to, as the case study "Daughter from Danang" illustrates. We all can acquire any culture if we are raised in it, just as most people can learn any language. Through these processes of exposure and learning, people acquire their culture and transmit it to others. Chapter 5 further explores the topic of enculturation.

enculturation
Process of learning one's culture through informal observation and formal instruction.

Case Study

Daughter from Danang

Mai Thi Hiep was born in Danang, Vietnam, in 1968. She was the daughter of a Vietnamese mother and an American soldier who had abandoned Hiep's mother when she became pregnant. In 1975, her Vietnamese mother, troubled by the chaos of war, participated in "Operation Babylift," an American government program that placed racially mixed children from Vietnam for adoption in the United States, wanting to protect her child and expecting her to be returned later. Hiep's mother also feared reprisals from Vietnamese angered by the U.S. intervention in Vietnam.

At age 7, Hiep was sent to the United States, where a single woman adopted her. Hiep became Heidi and grew up in the small town of Pulaski, Tennessee. Heidi recalls that her adoptive mother advised her not to tell people that she was Vietnamese because

of the racial climate in Pulaski. Heidi learned to think of herself as American. She forgot her native language quickly because she had no other Vietnamese people to speak with, and she acquired all of the tastes and attitudes of American teenagers. By 1997, Heidi had married an American serviceman and become the mother of two young daughters.

Heidi longed to reconnect with her birth mother and her Vietnamese family. By an odd coincidence, Heidi and her mother were contacting various agencies at about the same time, trying to find one another. Heidi located her mother and arranged for Heidi to visit her family in Danang. Before the trip, Heidi spoke of "going home." It was "...going to be so healing for us. It would make all those bad memories [of war and separation] go away."

Reuniting with her Vietnamese family was deeply moving, but Heidi found the sights and sounds of Vietnam strange. She was shocked by the poverty of people on the streets and of her own family. At the first dinner, she did not know the etiquette of how to eat (dipping food from common plates into sauces rather than the American custom of placing a quantity of food on one's own plate), and was not used to the spiciness of the cooking. Within a few days, more problems surfaced. Heidi's mother never left her alone, holding her hand as they walked through the streets, touching and hugging her whenever she could. Although Heidi began to "feel a little smothered," she was also a little "jealous" of the "love and unity" characteristic of Vietnamese kinship ties.

Her mother asked Heidi to help a sister who was extremely poor. Heidi gave her money, but when her sister asked for more, Heidi felt insulted. "I didn't come here to be anybody's salvation, I came here to be reunited." This was not what she had imagined. She wanted to "escape back to the world I feel comfortable in." For Heidi, love and asking for financial support were incompatible needs, but to her Vietnamese kin, asking for money didn't lessen the integrity of their love.

Before Heidi's departure, their final meeting revealed the stark contrasts between Heidi's expectations and those of her family. Her brother began to talk about their mother's advancing age and her need for material and emotional support. He said that for twenty-two years, "we, your siblings, have been taking care of our mother. We hope that now you will assume your filial responsibility toward her," meaning to send money monthly. Again, Heidi was shocked, but her mother understood her negative reaction to this direct request for financial help: "What does she know about the Vietnamese notion of love and emotion?

She's used to living in a different way." Heidi's brother added, "We are trying to understand your situation, and we hope you'll try to understand ours.... As a Vietnamese, I thought what I said was normal." Although saddened by her family's situation, Heidi could not respond the way they expected. "It's not how I wanted it to be."

From a cultural perspective, the complex, conflicting expectations of both Heidi and her Vietnamese relatives were understandable and appropriate, given the cultural contexts in which each lived and the attitudes and values that they had learned. Although Heidi was born Vietnamese, she had become an American. Because her family remembered her as the child known as Hiep, they expected her to conform to their own system of values. Heidi interpreted her family's expectations through the lens of American culture because most of her socialization had taken place in the United States.

This story demonstrates how cultural learning molds people to regard their society's practices and values as normal and natural. Understanding other people's reactions from their own perspective requires insight and empathy.

DAUGHTER FROM DANANG, PBS American Experience. Directed by Gail Dolgin and Vicente Franco. Copyright (c) 2003.

Although most human cultural behavior is the result of learning, this behavior is also influenced by inherited drives as well as acquired needs. People must fulfill important physical and survival needs, just like all living creatures. People need to eat, drink, sleep, eliminate body wastes, and engage in sexual activity. And like other primates, people also need to interact with one another to obtain food and protection. Culture intervenes in and influences the ways in which people satisfy these needs.

For example, each culture has attitudes about what kinds of foods are edible and suitable for human consumption. People do not eat everything that is edible in their environment; they select some foods and reject others, expressing these choices as preferences and prohibitions, or **taboos**. In the United States and Canada, most people

taboos
Norms specifying behaviors that are prohibited in a culture.

How many meals do you eat in a day, and at what times? What kinds of foods do you eat at each meal? If you ate eggs at different mealtimes, how might you prepare them differently for each meal, and why? What do your answers to these questions reveal about your cultural norms and values?

consider eating insects distasteful, but many peoples of Australia, Asia, Mexico, and Africa consider insects a delicacy. The Maasai of Kenya and northern Tanzania drink the blood of their cattle. Koreans farm puppies for meat. Religion-based taboos forbidding Hindus to eat beef and forbidding Muslims and Jews to eat pork further illustrate the mediation of survival needs through culture. Further, people also have norms about how many meals to have, when to eat them, and which kinds of foods to eat at each meal.

Although all people need to sleep, they normally do so at a culturally prescribed time and place. No matter how tired you are at work, it would probably be inappropriate to lie down on the floor or your desk to sleep. People follow culturally prescribed rules about where and when to eliminate body wastes. Most people are taught not to urinate or defecate in public under any circumstances, for example. In fact, doing so may be a criminal offense. All cultures also have norms about when and how to satisfy sexual urges appropriately. These norms include strong taboos that prohibit sexual relations between parents and their children and between siblings.

Societies enculturate children in culturally specific ways. In many societies, children are expected to learn skills informally by observation and imitation. That is, they watch and observe their parents or other elders and learn by trying to do the same things. Adults may offer guidance, but for the most part, the child learns by doing and is an active participant in the process. This type of learning takes place in all communities in some contexts, but training and education also take place in formal settings such as schools in some societies.

Casual observation of others as they interact informally also plays a role in enculturation. Through observation, children learn attitudes: They hear what people have to say about themselves and others, and what they think of other people's behavior. They listen to people express their beliefs about the world. Through these conversations and interactions, children learn what is valued and what is criticized by members of the community. In these contexts, they thus gain a sense of personal identity as well as a sense of the world and their place in it.

cultural core

Practices by which people organize their work and produce food and other goods necessary for their survival.

Culture Is Adaptive

When anthropologists say that culture is adaptive, they are usually referring to behaviors and beliefs that respond to environmental constraints and opportunities that ensure a community's survival. People must adapt to their environment, and culture is their chief mechanism of adaptation. Because of their capacity for adaptation, humans can survive in nearly any environment. Further, people can modify their environments and create artificial ones to enhance survival. Cultural adaptations often involve technological innovation and the elaboration of material culture. For example, people living on islands or along coasts construct rafts, canoes, and boats to cross rivers, bays, and oceans, and people everywhere make a vast array of tools and equipment to help them obtain food and perform other kinds of subsistence tasks. The tools and practices that enable people to satisfy their survival and adaptation needs make up what is called a **cultural core**.

This crop duster's payload is carefully regulated because chemical fertilizers may contaminate food and deplete land productivity in the long term.

Although adaptation through culture is a fundamental and universal process, not all cultural practices are adaptive. Some practices may be maladaptive or have unintended negative consequences as circumstances change. Sometimes solving one problem may lead to new, unforeseen problems.

The archaeological record gives us some clues about how agricultural techniques that turned out to have unforeseen negative consequences contributed to the decline of several large and prosperous ancient cultures in both the Eastern and Western Hemispheres. For example, Sumer in ancient Mesopotamia (what is now southern Iraq)

had developed large city-states by 3000 B.C. The Sumerian economy was based on intensive farming, made possible by extensive irrigation systems that channeled water from the Tigris and Euphrates rivers to fields. Sumerian farmers produced a greater yield of crops than farmers in the region produce today (Sasson 1995).

Over time, crop yields declined. One reason for the eventual fall of Sumerian civilization was that intensive irrigation increased salinization, or salt content, in the soil. As the land deteriorated, Sumer was no longer able to support large populations without a decline in living standards (Peregrine 2003).

The Industrial Revolution provides a more recent example of unintended negative consequences. Industry's ability to supply millions of people with an ever-increasing amount and variety of products led to pollution, contamination, and overexploitation of natural resources and nonrenewable energy resources. Many practices, like the heavy reliance on chemical fertilizers and pesticides commonly used in industrial agriculture, are maladaptive in the long run, although they may increase productivity in the short term.

Thus, the idea that culture is adaptive needs to be considered in context. That is, a particular practice may be adaptive in one situation but not in another. For instance, farming techniques used in temperate climates to increase crop yields may be counterproductive in the Amazon rain forest because the topsoil there is too thin and relatively infertile to sustain them. This is exactly what is happening in parts of the Amazon today, where environmentally inappropriate farming techniques are harming the long-term viability of the soil (Schmink and Wood 1992).

Case Study

Maladaptive Adaptations: Kuru and Mad Cow

In 1910, a new disease appeared among the South Fore (pronounced For'ray), a farming people of New Guinea. This progressive disease, called *kuru* (meaning "trembling" or "fear" in the Fore language), affects the central nervous system and slowly leads to complete physical incapacitation and death. Victims gradually become unable to sit or walk unaided, focus their eyes, speak clearly, or even swallow. Death usually occurs six to twelve months after the onset of symptoms, although some people may survive as long as two years.

Investigation of the spread of kuru during the 1950s led to suspicion that it correlated with ritual cannibalism by women. In Fore society, as elsewhere in New Guinea, women are the primary farmers, growing sweet potatoes, yams, and other vegetables. They also care for the domesticated pigs each household keeps. Men clear the fields and hunt, but do little farm labor. Women live in small huts with their children and pigs, and men reside communally in a "men's house," eating and sleeping away from their families. Fore culture emphasizes concepts of pollution and danger, against which rituals serve as antidotes. This includes the belief that women pose a threat to male strength and vitality. Men and women also participate in different social and ceremonial activities.

In the early 1900s, South Fore women began practicing cannibalism as part of their mourning ceremonies when a female relative died. This ritual involved eating the brains and body parts of

the deceased kin. According to anthropologist Shirley Lindenbaum (1979), this practice had some adaptive value because it provided needed protein, particularly for women. As the population increased and more land came under cultivation, sources of animal protein had declined. In addition, men had access to more high-quality protein than women because they claimed greater rights to the pigs. They believed that other sources of protein, such as insects, frogs, and small mammals, were not only unfit for men but might threaten their health and vigor. Thus, women may have turned to cannibalism to secure more protein.

When a South Fore woman died, her female relatives dismembered her body and ate it. Some of the meat was given to children of either sex, but adult men rarely ate it because of the belief that contact with women (and, logically, eating their flesh) was dangerous and polluting. The Fore did not associate cannibalism with kuru, but they were alarmed by the high incidence of the disease, particularly among women. They attributed kuru to sorcery, a common cause of illness and death in their belief system. When someone died of kuru, kinspeople tried to identify the evildoer, usually accusing someone who might have had reason to wish the victim harm.

Between 1957 and 1968, when the disease was at its height, about 1,000 people died in the South Fore population of 8,000. The fact that nearly all the deaths were of adult women added to the social and economic burden, because women produced the crops, tended the pigs, and gave birth. In some villages, nearly half of the adult female deaths and nearly all of the deaths of children between ages 5 and 16 were due to kuru (Foster and Anderson 1978).

The riddle of kuru was not solved until the late 1960s, when the anthropologist-virologist Carlton Gajdusek discovered that the disease was transmitted by a prion, the same kind of agent responsible for mad cow disease. Prions, slow-acting proteins that attack and destroy brain tissue, remain dormant for years after they are ingested but eventually cause progressive damage to the brain. Thus, when South Fore women and children ate the brains of their female relatives, they unknowingly ingested the cause of their own deaths. The incidence of kuru began to decline after the Australian colonial administration in New Guinea persuaded the Fore to give up ritual cannibalism.

The Fore had adopted a maladaptive practice. Similarly, the spread of mad cow disease in Britain in the 1980s and 1990s resulted from a procedure that seemed financially beneficial in the short term but ultimately proved disastrous. Companies began to use bonemeal derived from sheep brains as cheap protein filler for cattle feed. However, some of the bonemeal was infected with a disease called scrapie, caused by agents of the family of prions similar to those that caused kuru. When cattle ate the infected bonemeal, they developed symptoms similar to those manifested by the Fore.

Once mad cow disease became known and its source identified, more than 140,000 cows in Britain had to be slaughtered to prevent the disease from spreading. In 1996, some people in Britain who died of a prion-caused disease now identified as Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease were thought to have become sick after eating beef infected with mad cow disease. As a consequence, more British cattle were slaughtered to stem a potential epidemic. The European Union banned the export of British beef from 1996 to 1999, and nearly half of the country's 11 million cattle were destroyed. Some British cattle imported into Canada and the United States also were destroyed.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture now bars importation of cattle and many cattle by-products from Britain and most other European nations. The Food and Drug Administration has also banned the use of beef proteins or hormonal extracts from cattle organs in medicines, dietary supplements, and cosmetics. The economic loss to the European and Canadian cattle industry has been disastrous. Using cheap sheep brains to fatten cattle ended up costing millions of dollars and many lives.

Mad cow disease, like kuru among the Fore, demonstrates that people sometimes engage in practices that seem to make sense when first introduced but have consequences in the long term that are maladaptive and even life threatening. These two syndromes are vastly different in their cultural causes, one stemming from religious beliefs and the other driven by the economic motive to cut costs. However, they share a similar process, namely, that seemingly sensible behavior often has unforeseen and dangerous consequences.

What are some other examples of "maladaptive" adaptations in today's world?

Culture Is Integrated

cultural integration
Tendency for people's practices and beliefs to form a relatively coherent and consistent system.

Cultural integration refers to the observation that people's practices and beliefs form a relatively coherent and consistent system. Cultures are not simply random collections of activities, but instead are patterned and interrelated in systematic ways. For example, behaviors that take place in one domain, such as political organization, tend

to be compatible with and support behaviors taking place in other domains, such as family organization. Anthropologists recognize that terms such as *economy, social organization, family organization,* and *government* are not discrete, separable units of activity but are closely intertwined. For example, economic activities are usually integrated with, affect, and are affected by other kinds of activities. The work of obtaining food and other goods and services is often performed by people who occupy particular social roles and statuses. Gender roles may assign men and women different kinds of work in contributing to their household economies. Also, social norms or, in complex societies, laws enacted by legislatures and policies formulated by political agencies tend to be consistent with particular economic consequences and to reinforce particular economic goals.

The shared ways that people organize their lives are major integrating factors. In some societies, religious beliefs permeate and guide all aspects of daily life. Religion then becomes an overarching, integrative system of beliefs and practices. People in societies integrated by religion might perform daily rituals to bless and safeguard themselves and their families; they may recite prayers when hunting or planting crops to ensure success; and they may ask for spirit protection when engaging in any dangerous activity. People in these societies believe that the human and spiritual realms are not separable but that spiritual forces are omnipresent and continually affect their lives.

Naturally, not all aspects of cultural behavior and belief are internally consistent or integrated with all others. Thus, the concept of cultural integration needs to be understood loosely, as a process of adjustment and change, not as static and rigid. Humans and their experiences are not so neat and tidy. Nevertheless, cultural systems as wholes tend toward consistency. A consequence of this consistency and integration is that change in one societal domain causes change in others (see the case study "Women and Work in the United States," for example). Societies are not bounded units (either of people or ideas); rather, external influences from other peoples or internal tensions and innovations lead to changes in practices and attitudes.

Case Study

Consequences of Cultural Integration: Women and Work in the United States

In the United States, changes in women's participation in paid employment have affected both their roles in other spheres of life and the prevailing attitudes about men and women (Fox and Hesse-Biber 1984). Women's rates of employment began to rise significantly during World War II, as a consequence of the nation's military and economic policies. As millions of men entered the armed forces, millions of jobs necessary to support the economy and the war effort were left vacant. Public policy encouraged women to do their patriotic duty by working in factories and offices, where they had previously met resistance and discrimination. The banner of women's rights, which had won American women the right to vote in 1920, was raised again.

After the war, many women returned to exclusively domestic roles, but others remained in the workforce, partly for personal reasons and partly to improve their family's standard of living. Also, work outside the home gave women a degree of financial equality with their husbands. Women's economic gains contributed to rising rates of divorce because wives could sometimes afford to leave unhappy marriages, and husbands could leave if they felt that their ex-wives could be at least partially

self-supporting (Costello et al. 1998). In intact families, greater financial equality as well as the greater amount of time that women spent outside the home contributed to shifting the roles of husbands toward some household and child-care responsibilities.

By the late twentieth century, the percentage of marriages that ended in divorce had risen, and the social stigma formerly associated with divorce had all but disappeared. Also, women's paid employment and opportunities to make prominent contributions in public arenas had expanded. Today, more legislators, governors, and heads of government agencies are women. Women's leadership roles in religion have also broadened; many Protestant and Jewish denominations ordain women ministers and rabbis. More women have advanced educational degrees and are more accepted in formerly male-dominated occupations and professions, such as law and law enforcement, the military, and the building trades.

Changes in women's roles have also affected how men think about themselves and their work. Husbands now expect their wives to contribute to household incomes. And work roles for men have become more flexible. A father can be a stay-at-home dad if his wife's work brings in more money than his or if he simply prefers that role. And society has become more accepting of men working in certain jobs traditionally associated with women, such as nursing and elementary school teaching.

Changes in the roles and status of women in American society have affected men's lives as well as the society as a whole.

Thus, within a mere fifty years, changes in one societal sphere in the United States have led to changes both in other spheres and in people's thoughts and behaviors. These multiple and interrelating effects illustrate how cultural integration can lead to cultural transformation.

Culture Is Based on Symbols

symbol
A word, image, or object that stands for cultural ideas or sentiments.

People's behaviors and understanding of the world are based on meanings expressed through symbols. A **symbol** is a word or object that represents or stands for an idea, event, meaning, or sentiment. Language is a pervasive and powerful symbol system. Words in any language are just sequences of sounds, but each sequence is a symbol of or represents something other than the sounds themselves. The collection of sounds in each word in this sentence, for instance, stands for some arbitrarily assigned meaning.

Symbols permeate human culture in many ways. Objects, art, and artistic performances may represent powerful cultural ideas and attitudes. The colors and designs of national flags, for instance, come to be associated with complex levels of meaning. People can understand those meanings by examining the contexts of flag use, the way people talk about their national colors, and the way people react to them. Flags are used to symbolically represent a country, a territorial and cultural unit differentiated from all other similarly organized territorial and cultural units. Flags take on additional associations, demonstrated by the emotional reactions they can trigger in observers. People may use their country's flag in ways that show their attitudes and political beliefs. For example, in the United States, after the al Qaeda attack on 9/11, flag pins became necessities for many political figures and represented a show of support for the "war on terror" that the United States undertook.

What emotional reactions can images of national flags stir? How has the American flag been used to display both positive and negative feelings about the U.S. government or its policies?

Religion, too, is a domain filled with symbolic meanings. Believers invest tremendous importance in objects considered to have religious significance. Ordinary objects and substances used in rituals take on sacred properties. Books, cups, images, pieces of cloth or wood, or foodstuffs can be symbols of beliefs and can evoke powerful emotions and dramatize sacred actions. Symbolic culture thus includes both sacred and secular meanings and all the ways in which those meanings are communicated.

Culture often is expressed in symbolic interaction between individuals using verbal and nonverbal language. Thus, language can also be used to challenge basic assumptions encoded in ordinary speech. For example, a dialect of Caribbean immigrants and their descendants in Great Britain, called Afro-Lingua, focuses on the ways that standard English transmits common cultural assumptions about race in the uses and meanings that associate *white* with "good" and *black* with "bad." For example, in common English expressions, "a black day" means a day when things go drastically wrong, and "a black sheep" means an outcast family member (Bones 1986, 46). Afro-Lingua speakers might refer to "a white day" and "a white sheep" in equivalent contexts. In addition, Afro-Lingua changes syllables in some English words to highlight cultural and political meanings: The word *politics* is transformed into *politricks,* and *oppression* becomes *downpression* (Wong 1986, 119).

Humor is another form of symbolic cultural communication. For example, Western Apache communities in New Mexico have a repertoire of joke routines that ridicule Anglos by imitating and exaggerating their intrusive, domineering communicative styles (Basso 1979). Apaches find these Anglo communication styles insensitive at best and offensive at worst. Scorned behaviors include making direct eye contact with or staring at interlocutors, touching another person while talking to him or her, calling casual acquaintances "friend," and asking intrusive personal questions. Through their informal comic routines, Apaches share the opposite norms and values.

Both the changes in English expressions used by speakers of Afro-Lingua and the joking routines of Western Apaches demonstrate the ways that symbolic behavior can be used to challenge dominant values. Through symbolic practices, people can forge their unity with others and can simultaneously develop and transmit messages of resistance. Afro-Lingua speakers defy commonplace notions of race and power; Western Apaches resist communicative norms imposed on them by dominant Anglo society.

Globalization

Afro-Lingua is a language that was created to symbolically challenge the basic assumptions encoded in the ordinary speech of European colonizers of the Caribbean.

What would you learn about cultural communication from studying in your workplace or dorm?

Culture Organizes the Way People Think about the World

Through exposure to cultural symbols, enculturation, and the acquisition of shared cultural concepts, people develop ways of thinking about themselves, their lives, other people, and the world. Culture, therefore, consists of systems of meaning produced and interpreted by members. Underlying shared concepts and meanings become so ingrained that they are taken for granted, assumed to be true. People understand them as natural and commonsense. These are **naturalized concepts**, ideas thought to be essential and to exist in nature. Since people understand these naturalized concepts to be part of the "natural" world, they are unaware of their cultural origins and do not question their legitimacy. Indeed, they don't think about them at all. And these taken-for-granted suppositions have all the more influence on people because they are not consciously thought about.

naturalized concepts

Ideas and behaviors so deeply embedded in a culture that they are regarded as universally normal or natural.

These American children are forming group identities based on symbiotic culture.

All societies have a core of naturalized ideas, based on societal norms. For example, in most capitalist societies, it is taken for granted that people want to own property and obtain wealth. It is assumed that people are naturally competitive and want to continually acquire more property, own larger and more expensive houses, and have unlimited access to possessions. Yet people in these societies generally may not understand that their attitudes and values about property and wealth stem from the kind of economic system they live in. Models of gender are also deeply naturalized in people's behaviors and attitudes. We come to believe that men's and

women's roles and value are derived from qualities, feelings, and needs inherent in women and men rather than understanding that these gender models are largely derived from culture. In other words, people who lack an anthropological perspective think that their attitudes and values are natural and universal rather than products of their culture. Thus, naturalized concepts orient people's thinking about themselves and the world, forming a background ideology that gives meaning to people's behaviors and attitudes. To the extent that they shape the way we view other cultures, they are also a source of ethnocentrism.

What are some examples of culture wars in U.S. society today? What are some examples of countercultures in U.S. history?

Although all cultures have fundamental organizing concepts, these principles may be challenged from within the society. In all societies, members of different subcultures or subgroups hold alternative and conflicting values. Alternative views may be discussed and debated in the context of mutual respect or they may erupt in more contentious challenges, in what some observers refer to as culture wars. Expressions of antipathy between conservatives and liberals over many social policy issues in the United States, such as gun control, abortion rights, gay rights, and immigration policy, are examples of so-called culture wars.

By contrast, individuals and groups engaging in practices with underlying meanings that conflict with prevailing assumptions and norms may be participants in a **counterculture**—an alternative culture model. Members of a counterculture view themselves as being in active opposition to dominant cultural themes and values. For example, the hippies of the 1960s openly rejected prevailing puritanical attitudes toward sex, the materialism of contemporary society, and the militaristic policies of the government as it escalated the war in Vietnam.

counterculture
An alternative cultural model within a society that expresses different views about the way that society should be organized.

Challenges to widely recognized assumptions often come from members of groups that are marginalized or oppressed, or who hold different **worldviews** than those of the dominant groups or elites. For example, apartheid, South Africa's dominant racist cultural ideology until the 1990s, was imposed by a powerful white minority that had inherited power through colonial rule. That rule was challenged by the majority of black South Africans, who eventually overturned that ideology and rebelled against the government that oppressed them. Black South Africans asserted not only their political rights but also their right to replace the cultural model of white supremacy with one of racial equality. Thus, many political movements seek more than a reordering of social and political forces. They also seek the institutionalization of new cultural models as organizing principles in their society.

worldview
A culture-based way that people understand the world and their relations among themselves and with other peoples.

Similarly, through symbolic culture, some segments of a society might resist the official culture or offer an alternative cultural model. In the Middle East and North Africa, women's challenges to the ideology of male dominance often take the form of poetry and song, a low-risk context for expressing discontent. Bedouin women, for example, recite poetry and compose songs expressing their longings for love and respect. Song lyrics express passion and joy in attentions they receive from clandestine lovers (Abu-Lughod 1986; 1990). Artistic genres thus permit women to verbalize private feelings that run contrary to accepted norms of female deference and modesty.

Humor also often functions to make fun of and thereby subvert dominant cultural norms and attitudes and to encourage solidarity among members of marginalized and stigmatized groups. While of course humorous stories and "jokes" can be used by dominant segments of society to alienate members of stigmatized groups, these same communicative means are available for resistance. Marginalized groups may develop "in jokes" that transmit understandings that they have about their own value and worthiness in opposition to prevailing cultural models. Finally, humor can be used by people who suffer many kinds of exploitation (based on class, gender, or race) as a way of coping with this suffering (see Goldstein 2003 for an extended discussion of this process among residents of a shanty town outside Rio de Janeiro).] Table 2.1 summarizes the characteristics of culture as it is defined in this chapter. This section then closes with a story in the In Their Own Voices section (pages 34–35) about an anthropologist's field experience that highlights the challenges of understanding cultures as unique collections of symbols and meanings.

Table 2.1 Characteristics of Culture

Culture Is Shared	Behavior, attitudes, and ideas are formed through interaction with others.
	Norms: Sets of expectations and attitudes that people have about appropriate behavior.
	Subculture: A group whose members interact more frequently among themselves and share attitudes and practices that are distinct from others.
Culture Is Learned	Culture is acquired rather than inherited.
	Enculturation: The learning of one's cultural behaviors, attitudes, and values.
Culture Is Adaptive	Aspects of behavior and belief are responses to environmental constraints and the need to ensure a community's survival.
	Cultural core: Basic practices that function to satisfy people's adaptive needs.
Culture Is Integrated	Practices and beliefs form a relatively coherent and consistent system.
	Cultural model: Comprehensive shared ideas about the ideal culture.
Culture Is Based on Symbols	People's behavior and understanding of the world are based on meanings expressed through language, art, and symbolic objects.
	Symbols: Words, images, or objects that stand for cultural ideas or sentiments.
Culture Organizes the Way People Think about the World	**Naturalized concepts:** Ideas and behaviors so deeply embedded in a culture that they are regarded as universally normal or natural.
	Worldview: The culture-based way that people see the world and other peoples.
	Counterculture: Alternative cultural model within a society that expresses opposition to dominant social and political views.

REVIEW Characteristics of culture include the fact that it is shared. Individuals who belong to a culture share assumptions about the world and develop cultural models and societal norms and taboos that define how one should and should not behave. Members of different subcultures in a society share culture differently. Culture is also learned through enculturation. We are enculturated both formally and informally through social interactions with other members of society. Culture is adaptive in that people change their culture when needed or when influenced to change. The knowledge, skills, and tools people use to survive and adapt are referred to as the cultural core. Culture is integrated—that is, aspects of culture are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Thus, cultural integration means that change in one aspect of culture leads to changes in other aspects. The existence of culture wars and countercultures within a society illustrates, however, that cultures are not fully shared or rigidly integrated, and that alternative cultural models coexist. Culture is based on symbols, and language is the most important symbol system people use. Symbolic objects and symbolic communication are used in diverse contexts, such as religion and humor. Culture influences the way people organize their experience and their worldview. They use naturalized concepts to apply their cultural assumptions to their own and other people's ways of life.

Culture Change

2.3 Illustrate the internal and external processes that produce culture change.

Cultures are dynamic systems that respond to societal and historical changes from numerous sources. The view of "traditional" or indigenous societies as static and timeless is untenable. All societies experience innovation from within and influences from outside origins. Some sources of culture change are internal, emerging from new practices and attitudes, technological innovations, or adaptations to the consequences of earlier

Globalization

Culture contact, a major force in the process of globalization, leads to several strategies and consequences of culture change, including acculturation, assimilation, and reactive adaptation.

culture contact
Direct interaction between peoples of different cultures through migration, trade, invasion, or conquest.

syncretism
Process by which a cultural product is created when people adapt a cultural item selectively borrowed from another culture to fit their existing culture.

assimilation
Process by which a less numerous and less powerful cultural group changes its ways and cultural identity to blend in with the dominant culture.

acculturation
Process by which a group adjusts to living within a dominant culture while at the same time maintaining its original cultural identity.

cultural pluralism
Condition in a stratified society in which many diverse cultural groups ideally live together equally and harmoniously without losing their cultural identities and diversity.

modernization
Complex culture change, both internal and external, based on industrialism and a transnational market economy.

practices. Other sources of culture change emerge as people borrow ideas or artifacts from their neighbors or from people with whom they interact through migration, trade, or other contacts. Some borrowings take place in friendly interactions during **culture contact**, but others are forced on people, as in conquest or foreign intervention.

Although it may be possible to identify original sources of change as internal or external, in practice these are interconnected processes. For instance, cultural changes stimulated by external sources then typically undergo further change through internal processes. As the Zuni story you read in Chapter 1 showed, people usually adapt outside cultural borrowings to their own cultures. They may borrow only parts of a cultural item, such as a story or a way of organizing economic activity, and combine those parts with items that already exist in their cultural repertoire. For example, in the realm of religion, people often combine elements of their traditional beliefs with those that they learn from external sources as a consequence of culture contact. This process, called **syncretism**, is seen in religions such as Santería, which combines traditional Afro-Caribbean beliefs in magic and witchcraft with Roman Catholicism. Spanish colonizers in the Caribbean derisively called this religion of the Yoruba—and other Bantu slaves from Nigeria, Senegal, and the Guinea Coast—Santería, "Way of the Saints."

Anthropologists have other terms to describe the kinds of internal change that take place following culture contact, depending on the power relations between peoples and the extent of change. **Assimilation** occurs when a less numerous and less powerful group changes its ways to blend in with the dominant culture. In assimilating, people abandon or modify their prior beliefs and practices and adopt the cultural repertoire of the dominant population. For example, immigrants may voluntarily change their national and cultural identities by assimilating the language and culture of their new country. Assimilation is also sometimes forced on people by a dominant culture, especially in the context of conquest and colonization. These processes will be explored in depth in Chapters 7 and 17.

A group's adjustment to living within another, more dominant culture while at the same time maintaining its original cultural identity is called **acculturation**. For example, many Native Americans in the United States and Canada adopt many features of dominant American culture, such as the economic and political systems, but maintain their own languages, family systems, and religious beliefs. The term **cultural pluralism** describes a stratified society that contains many diverse cultural groups who ideally live together equally and harmoniously. Other complex changes that occur through combinations of external and internal processes include economic transformations, such as **modernization**, based on industrialism and a market economy.

In Their Own Voices

Hamlet and the Tiv

An anthropologist's effort to explain Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to Tiv villagers in central Nigeria illustrates how far both the anthropologist and the Tiv culture shape the way they think about the world. When Laura Bohannan lived among the Tiv, they were a farming people living in small villages. Village life centered on groups of families related through men, with fathers, sons, and brothers forming the core of households. After marriage, women moved from their families to live with their husband's relatives. Men prepared fields for planting, but women planted seeds, weeded the plants, and harvested crops. In addition to their families, men depended on their age-mates—other men of the same age group—for help in times of trouble.

Bohannan was prompted to tell the story of Hamlet because she thought it had a universal meaning that people everywhere would understand in the same way. The Tiv elders also thought the story had universal meaning—but a different one. To both Bohannan and the elders, their particular understanding seemed obvious, showing how powerful cultural assumptions can be. If you need to refresh your memory on what Hamlet is about, read the summary at http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/hamlet/summary.html. To read the rest of Bohannan's amusing and insightful article, search the Internet for "Shakespeare in the Bush."

The following excerpt expresses the views of both Bohannan and Tiv villagers on the meaning of the play.

I began in the proper style, "Not yesterday, not yesterday, but long ago, a thing occurred. One night three men were keeping watch outside the homestead of the great chief, when suddenly they saw the former chief approach them."

"Why was he no longer their chief?"

"He was dead," I explained. "That is why they were troubled and afraid when they saw him."

"Impossible," began one of the elders. "Of course it wasn't the dead chief. It was an omen sent by a witch . . . "

Slightly shaken, I continued. "One of these three was a man who knew things"—the closest translation for *scholar,* but unfortunately it also meant *witch.* "So he spoke to the dead chief saying, "Tell us what we must do so you may rest in your grave," but the dead chief did not answer.

There was a general shaking of heads round the circle. "Had the dead chief no living brothers? Or was this son the chief?"

"He had one living brother who became the chief when the elder brother died. In our country the son is next to the father. The dead chief's younger brother had become the great chief. He had also married his elder brother's widow only about a month after the funeral."

"He did well," the old man beamed and announced to the others. "I told you that if we knew more about Europeans, we could find they really were very like us. In our country also," he added to me, "the younger brother marries the elder brother's widow and becomes the father of his children. Now, if your uncle, who married your widowed mother, is your father's full brother, then he will be a real father to you. Did Hamlet's father and uncle have one mother?"

His question barely penetrated my mind; I was too upset and thrown too far off balance by having one of the most important elements of Hamlet knocked straight out of the picture. Rather uncertainly I said that I thought they had the same mother, but I wasn't sure—the story didn't say. The old man told me severely that these genealogical details made all the difference and that when I got home I must ask the elders about it.

Determined to save what I could of the mother motif, I took a deep breath and began again. "The son Hamlet was very sad because his mother had married again so quickly. There was no need for her to do so, and it is our custom for a widow not to go to her next husband until she has mourned for two years."

"Two years is too long," objected the elder's wife. "Who will hoe your farms for you while you have no husband?"

I gave up.

"That night … the dead chief again appeared, and . . . Hamlet followed his dead father off to one side. When they were alone, Hamlet's dead father spoke."

"Omens can't talk!" The old man was emphatic.

"It was Hamlet's dead father. It was a thing we call a *ghost.*" I had to use the English word, for unlike many of the neighboring tribes, these people didn't believe in the survival after death of any individuating part of the personality.

"Dead men can't walk," protested my audience as one man.

I was quite willing to compromise. "A ghost is the dead man's shadow."

But again they objected. "Dead men cast no shadows."

"They do in my country," I snapped.

"Anyhow," I resumed, "Hamlet's dead father said that his own brother, the one who became chief, had poisoned him. He wanted Hamlet to avenge him. Hamlet believed this in his heart, for he did not like his father's brother."

"Now Hamlet's age-mates," I continued, "had brought with them a famous storyteller. Hamlet decided to have this man tell the chief and all his homestead a story about a man who had poisoned his brother because he desired his brother's wife and wished to be chief himself. Hamlet was sure the great chief could not hear the story without making a sign if he was indeed guilty, and then he would discover whether his dead father had told him the truth . . . . It was true, for when the storyteller was telling his tale before all the homestead, the great chief rose in fear. Afraid that Hamlet knew his secret, he planned to have him killed."

This time I had shocked my audience seriously. "For a man to raise his hand against his father's brother and the one who has become his father—that is a terrible thing. The elders ought to let such a man be bewitched."

I then pointed out that after all the man had killed Hamlet's father.

"No," pronounced the old man, speaking less to me than to the young men sitting behind the elders. "If your father's brother has killed your father, you must appeal to your father's age-mates; they may avenge him. No man may use violence against his senior relatives. . . . But if his father's brother had indeed been wicked enough to bewitch Hamlet and make him mad that would be a good story indeed, for it would be his fault that Hamlet, being mad, no longer had any sense and thus was ready to kill his father's brother."

There was a murmur of applause. Hamlet was again a good story to them, but it no longer seemed quite the same story to me.

The old man made soothing noises. "You tell the story well, and we are listening. But it is clear that the elders of your country have never told you what the story really means. No, don't interrupt! We believe you when you say your marriage customs are different, or your clothes and weapons. But people are the same everywhere; therefore, there are always witches and it is we, the elders, who know how witches work. We told you it was the great chief who wished to kill Hamlet, and now your own words have proved us right.

"Sometime," concluded the old man, "you must tell us some more stories of your country. We, who are elders, will instruct you in their true meaning, so that when you return to your own land your elders will see that you have not been sitting in the bush, but among those who know things and who have taught you wisdom."

Critical Thinking Question

What Tiv cultural assumptions and values caused them to interpret the story of *Hamlet* differently?